A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

1607-1765

Vol. 1

By
Moses Coit Tyler

Two Volum

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A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1607-1765

By Moses Coit Tyler

Moses Coit Tyler is still considered one of the finest literary historians America has produced. His two volume study, "A History of American Literature, 1607-1765," although published in 1888-89, has yet to be superceded. It is considered by many scholars as the best, most complete and most readable survey of American literature from the earliest settling of the colonies to the eve of the American Revolution.

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A HISTORY

OF

AMERICAN LITERATURE

I.

1607–1676

BY

MOSES COIT TYLER

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

CORNER HOUSE PUBLISHERS

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BY

CORNER HOUSE PUBLISHERS

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TO

SAMUEL COIT, OF HARTFORD,

AND

GEORGE COIT, OF NORWICH,

MY KINSMEN AND BENEFACTORS,

I DEDICATE

This Work

IN TOKEN OF UNCEASING GRATITUDE.

PREFACE.

It is my purpose to write the history of American literature from the earliest English settlements in this country, down to the present time. I hope to accomplish the work within the space of three or four volumes. Each of these volumes will cover a distinct period in the intellectual life of the American people; and while between the several volumes there will exist the tie of mutual interpretation and of historical consecutiveness, it is intended that each shall be, with reference to the epoch which it portrays, a complete and independent work.

Such unity and completeness have been aimed at in the present volumes, which, together, may be described as a history of the rise of American literature at the several isolated colonial centres, where at first each had its peculiar literary accent; of the growth of this sporadic colonial literature in copiousness, range, flexibility, in elegance and force, and especially in tendency toward a common national accent; until, finally, in 1765, after all the years of our minority and of our filial obedience had been lived, the scattered voices of the thirteen colonies were for the first time brought together and blended in one great and resolute utterance:—an utterance expressive of criticism upon the parental control wielded over us by England, of dissent from that control, and at last of resistance to it;

an utterance which meant, among other things, that the thirteen colonies were no longer thirteen colonies but a single nation only, with all its great hopes and great fears in common, with its ideas, its determinations, its literature, in common likewise. The real ending of our colonial epoch, the real beginning of our revolutionary epoch, coincided in that tremendous year of disenchantment, the year 1765. That year, therefore, fixes the limit of the present volumes; for in these volumes I have tried to tell the story of American literary activity during the time of our contented subordination to the European commonwealth out of which we came.

It is possible that the scope of this work is well enough indicated in the words just written; yet to prevent misconception, I venture to state my plan a little more explicitly. I have not undertaken to give an indiscriminate dictionary of all Americans who ever wrote anything, or a complete bibliographical account of all American books that were ever written. It is our literary history only, that I have undertaken to give;—that is, the history of those writings, in the English language, produced by Americans, which have some noteworthy value as literature, and some real significance in the literary unfolding of the American mind. But within the barriers fixed by the nature of this scheme, my work does aspire to be exhaustive. I have endeavored to examine the entire mass of American writings, during the colonial time, so far as they now exist in the public and private libraries of this country; and in the exercise of a most anxious judgment, and of a desire for completeness that has not grown weary even under physical fatigue, I have tried in these volumes to make an appropriate mention of every one of

our early authors whose writings, whether many or few, have any appreciable literary merit, or throw any helpful light upon the evolution of thought and of style in America, during those flourishing and indispensable days.

In the composition of a work of this kind, it is a very grave judicial responsibility that the author is forced to assume; it is also a very sacred responsibility. With reference to every name presented to him, there arises the debate, first, over its admission into the history at all; and, secondly, if admitted, over the amount of prominence to be given to it. Upon these two questions, scarcely any two persons can ever exactly agree. As to my own solution of these questions, I can only say that I have studied, as I believe, every American writer of the colonial time, in his extant writings; I have included him within this history or have excluded him from it, after fair inspection of his claims; and I have given to every writer whom I have admitted, just so much room as was demanded by my own sense of his relative literary importance, and by my own view of the necessary adjustment of historical proportions in this book. Upon no topic of literary estimation have I formed an opinion at second hand. In every instance, I have examined for myself the work under consideration. Wherever, upon any subject, I have consciously used the opinion of another, I have made specific acknowledgment of my indebtedness; and by constant reference in the foot-notes to the sources of my information, I have tried to help others in testing my own statements, and in prosecuting similar studies for themselves. Having, after the utmost painstaking, reached my own conclusions, I have endeavored to utter

them frankly, accepting the responsibility of them; and yet, so various are human judgments that I may not dare to hope that any other student of the subject will in all particulars agree with me.

Some difference of opinion, also, is likely to exist over the question of weaving into the text of a history of literature, passages from the authors who are described in it. First of all, let it be mentioned that to do this skilfully is by no means a saving of labor for the literary historian: indeed, after the great matters of construction have been settled, no part of his task is more difficult than this; none requires a daintier touch, a more sensitive judgment, or a literary sense more delicate and alert. It would be far easier to write a history of literature without illustrative quotations than with them. But in the service of his art, the true literary man can never think of his own ease as an offset to the pleasure of doing his work well; and for one, I do not see how a history of literature can be well done, or be of much use, without the frequent verification and illustration of its statements by expertly chosen examples from the authors under study. Unless such examples are given, the most precise, clear, and even vivid delineations of literary characteristics must, for those who have not read the authors spoken of, fade away into pallor and vagueness, and after a time become wearisome; while the whole work, as a presentation of literature, will seem, as Motley once wittily said to George Ticknor, "a kind of Barmecide's feast, in which the reader has to play the part of Shacabac, and believe in the excellence of the lamb stuffed with pistachio nuts, the flavor of the wines, and the perfume of the roses, upon the assertion of the entertainer, and without assist-

ance from his own perceptions."[1] On the general theory, therefore, which I hold of this department of the historical art, I should certainly have introduced into my history specimens of the literature concerning which I write; but there is an additional reason why I ought to do so in the present case. The literature of which I have here given an account, is a neglected literature, and probably must always remain neglected: the most of the books of which it is composed have not been read and cannot be read by many people now living; since those books exist in but few copies, and lurk as rare and costly literary treasures in a small number of libraries. To give only abstract descriptions of such a literature, and to assume that my readers can verify my statements, by their own recollections of it, or by immediate and easy references to it, would be mere trifling. The only course left to me, if I would render my labors of any real benefit to those for whom I write, is to give freely, and with as much discrimination as I possess, such portions of our early literature as may form a sort of terse anthology of it, and as may enable my own readers to feel for themselves something of what I have felt in my direct and prolonged researches in it.

It is my duty, likewise, to state here just what method I have adopted in the reproduction of the literary specimens that are given in this book. Obviously, their value for the purpose now in view would be destroyed, if they should be tampered with; if the historian of this body of literature should undertake to improve it by his own emendations of it,—correcting its syntax, chastising its

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[1] "Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor," II. 257.

vocabulary, or recomposing the structure of its sentences. This I have never knowingly done. I have tried to reproduce my illustrative passages precisely as they stand in the original texts, excepting in three particulars relating to mere mechanical form. The seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, were times of extreme inaccuracy in proof-reading, and of extreme confusion in punctuation and spelling; and I have thought it no violation of the integrity of quotation for me to spell and punctuate any sentence of those times according to present usage, and occasionally to correct a palpable error of the press. It will be understood, also, that whenever, in citing a passage, long or short, the purpose of my citation would be satisfied by giving only a fragment of it, I have given only the fragment; and that in such cases I have indicated, in the usual manner, the presence of an ellipsis.

The studies upon which this book is founded have been for several years my principal occupation; and it is my purpose to continue those studies, till I shall have gone over the remainder of the field. The result will be given to the public as soon as practicable; and I shall think it a good fortune if, by the publication of the present work, I may be brought into communication with the possessors of rare materials relating to the periods that I have yet to survey, and may thus be enabled to prosecute my further labors with some generous assistance which otherwise I might not have.

The years which I have given to the preparation of this book would not be regretted by me, were it for no other reason than that the prosecution of my researches has made me acquainted with the noble spirit of mutual help-

fulness prevailing among men of letters. I have not found them the irritable race that they have been named, but rather brethren, and friends, and benefactors. In all my explorations of public and private libraries, in all the conversation and correspondence that I have had to seek in my hunt after the sources of our literature, I have not one instance of unkindness to remember, or even of aid doled out reluctantly; but, on the contrary, more instances than I am able to remember of considerate and most bountiful help even from strangers, who, recognizing me as a working-brother in the guild of letters, have freely bestowed their kindness upon me. First of all, I must thank my Alma Mater, Yale College, and her accomplished librarian, Mr. Addison Van Name, for the loan of needed books sent to me in my distant home. For several months together, I was at work in the Astor Library, and had there every courtesy from the late Dr. Edward R. Straznicky, from Mr. Frederick Saunders, and from my kinsman, Mr. Arthur W. Tyler, now the librarian of the Johns Hopkins University. For a still longer time, have I pursued my studies at the library of the New York Historical Society, where Dr. George H. Moore, now of the Lenox Library, Mr. John Austin Stevens, and especially Mr. William Kelby, have given me every facility. I must add that my indebtedness to the first of the three gentlemen just named, is much greater than is implied in official assistance, however generous; since, for a number of years, I have had the privilege of consulting him personally upon any difficult problem that I encountered in my studies, and of receiving the benefit that could come only from such prolonged, minute, and accurate acquaintance as he possesses with American history and bibliography. While

upon my researches in the Prince Library, which is in the good keeping of the Public Library of Boston, I was constantly aided by Mr. Arthur Mason Knapp, by my college-mate, Mr. James L. Whitney, and by Mr. Justin Winsor; from the latter of whom I have also had kind assistance since his appointment to the superintendence of the library of Harvard College. I hardly know in what terms to thank the officers of the Massachusetts Historical Society, particularly Mr. Charles Deane and Dr. Samuel Abbott Green, for the cordiality and fulness of my welcome to the privileges of their library, and for innumerable acts of courtesy and of real help on their part. Mr. Charles Ward Dean, the librarian of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society, has been most friendly in his efforts to serve me. I also had willing help from the officers of the Boston Athenæum, upon my visit to that institution. In Providence, through the polite intervention of Mr. John Russell Bartlett, I experienced that generosity which may now be called hereditary, and which throws open to students the treasures of the superb library founded by the late John Carter Brown; while Mr. C. Fiske Harris, of the same city, gave me not only cordial hospitality but his personal assistance, when he permitted me to explore his unique collection of American poetry,—the most extensive, I suppose, in the world. My studies in Philadelphia were promoted to the utmost by the kind offices of Mr. William F. Ford, one of the editors of "The Times" newspaper in that city; of Mr. Lloyd P. Smith, the librarian of the Library Company; of Mr. John William Wallace, the president of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and of Mr. Frederick D. Stone, its librarian. In pursuing my re-

searches in the Library of Congress, I had the most efficient and affable help from Mr. Ainsworth R. Spofford, under whose enlightened and energetic direction the national library is becoming not only an honor to the country, but a blessing to every citizen.

In conclusion, I take pleasure in offering here my hearty thanks, for help of various kinds, to the Reverend Henry Martyn Dexter, of Boston; to Mr. John Langdon Sibley, of Cambridge; to Mr. John Bigelow, of New York; to Mr. Henry A. Homes, of the State Library at Albany; to the Reverend O. S. St. John, of Brooklyn, N. Y.; to the Reverend Edward D. Neill, of Macalister College, Minnesota; to Mr. Samuel F. Haven, of Worcester, Mass.; to Mr. Henry A. Chaney and Mr. C. Endicott, of Detroit; and to my friends and associates in the University of Michigan,—Professors Thomas M. Cooley, Henry S. Frieze, Elisha Jones, Edward L. Walter, and Isaac N. Demmon. The critical help that Professor Demmon has given in the revision of the proof-sheets, has been to me invaluable, as on his part it has been without stint of courtesy or toil.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor,
October 5, 1878.

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FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD.

1607-1676.

AMERICAN LITERATURE.

FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD: 1607–1676.

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  - George Percy.
  - William Strachey.
  - Alexander Whitaker.
  - John Pory.
  - Edward Winslow.
  - Francis Higginson.
  - William Wood.
  - John Hammond.
  - John Josselyn.
  - George Alsop.
- **Historical Writers.**
  - William Bradford.
  - John Winthrop.
  - Nathaniel Morton.
  - John Mason.
  - Edward Johnson.
  - Daniel Gookin.
  - Author of Burwell Papers.
- **Theological and Religious Writers.**
  - Thomas Hooker.
  - Thomas Shepard.
  - John Cotton.
  - Peter Bulkley.
  - John Norton.
  - William Hooke.
  - Charles Chauncey.
- **Miscellaneous Prose Writers.**
  - Nathaniel Ward.
  - Roger Williams.
- **Writers of Verse.**
  - George Sandys.
  - William Morrell.
  - Anne Bradstreet.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING.

I.—The Procession of the first English-speaking colonies from the old world to the new—Our first literary period that of the planting of the American nation—Our first American writers immigrant Americans—True Fathers of American Literature—The literary traits they brought with them.

II.—Why those first Americans wrote books—True classification of early American writings—Tidings sent back—Controversial appeals—Defences against calumny—Descriptions of the new lands—And of the new life there—Books of religion—Poetry—Histories—Miscellaneous prose.

III.—Birth year of American literature—State of English literature when American literature was born—Interest of Englishmen then in their barbaric American empire—Departure from England of the first English Americans—Michael Drayton's farewell ode to them.

THERE is but one thing more interesting than the intellectual history of a man, and that is the intellectual history of a nation. The American people, starting into life in the early part of the seventeenth century, have been busy ever since in recording their intellectual history in laws, manners, institutions, in battles with man and beast and nature, in highways, excavations, edifices, in pictures, in statues, in written words. It is in written words that this people, from the very beginning, have made the most confidential and explicit record of their minds. It is in these written words, therefore, that we shall now search for that record.

I.

We need to picture to ourselves the outgoing of the several English colonies which made their way hither in our earliest time, joining that long, grim, many-tongued procession which during all that era pushed westward from Europe toward this hemisphere. Between the year 1607, when Virginia, the first of these colonies, set its

timid foot safely down on the American shores, and the year 1682, when the last of them, Pennsylvania, arrived here, we are able to count no less than ten other local communities, of English blood and English speech, that began to find food and lodging and some sense of home-comfort in this land. Their names will never be too despicable to deserve repetition by us: they are, in the order of their establishment, Plymouth, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Maryland, Connecticut, Rhode Island, North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, South Carolina. These English colonies of the seventeenth century, which Francis Bacon nobly heralded as "amongst ancient, primitive, and heroical works,"[1] were not accidental things: they formed parts of a grand series of popular migrations from the old world to the new, all stimulated by an impulse acting on many nations, and over the space of many years. And so far as it concerned England and that portion of the new world which we now mean by the word America, the impulse just spoken of spent itself in that brave group of colonial enterprises which began with Virginia and ended with Pennsylvania.[2] The present race of Americans who are of English lineage—that is, the most numerous and decidedly the dominant portion of the American people of to-day—are the direct descendants of the crowds of Englishmen who came to America in the seventeenth century. Our first literary period, therefore, fills the larger part of that century in which American civilization had its planting; even as its training into some maturity and power has been the business of the eigh-

[1] "Essays," XXXIII.—Of Plantations. This essay contains several passages evidently founded upon the author's observation of Virginian affairs as reported in England. In one sentence he expressly mentions Virginia.

[2] Within the territory which afterward became the United States was established before the revolution one other English colony, Georgia. Its establishment, however, was in the eighteenth century, and was an isolated event, due to the philanthropy of one good man, who sought to provide in America a refuge for the debtors and paupers of Europe.

teenth and the nineteenth centuries. Of course, also, the most of the men who produced American literature during that period were immigrant authors of English birth and English culture; while the most of those who have produced American literature in the subsequent periods have been authors of American birth and of American culture. Notwithstanding their English birth, these first writers in America were Americans: we may not exclude them from our story of American literature. They founded that literature; they are its Fathers; they stamped their spiritual lineaments upon it; and we shall never deeply enter into the meanings of American literature in its later forms without tracing it back, affectionately, to its beginning with them. At the same time, our first literary epoch cannot fail to bear traces of the fact that nearly all the men who made it were Englishmen who had become Americans merely by removing to America. American life, indeed, at once reacted upon their minds, and began to give its tone and hue to their words; and for every reason, what they wrote here, we rightfully claim as a part of American literature; but England has a right to claim it likewise as a part of English literature. Indeed England and America are joint proprietors of this first tract of the great literary territory which we have undertaken to survey. Ought any one to wonder, however, if in the American literature of the seventeenth century he shall find the distinctive traits, good and bad, which during the same period characterized English literature? How could it be otherwise? Is it likely that an Englishman undergoes a literary revolution by sitting down to write in America instead of in England; or that he will write either much better or much worse only for having sailed across a thousand leagues of brine?

II.

Undoubtedly literature for its own sake was not much thought of, or lived for, in those days. The men and

women of force were putting their force into the strong and most urgent tasks pertaining to this world and the next. There was an abundance of intellectual vitality among them; and the nation grew

> "strong thru shifts, an' wants, an' pains,
> Nussed by stern men with empires in their brains."[1]

Literature as a fine art, literature as the voice and the ministress of æsthetic delight, they had perhaps little skill in and little regard for; but literature as an instrument of humane and immediate utility, they honored, and at this they wrought with all the earnestness that was born in their blood. They wrote books not because they cared to write books, but because by writing books they could accomplish certain other things which they did care for.

And what were those other things? If we can discover them we shall at once grasp the clue to the right classification and the right interpretation of that still chaotic heap of writings which make up American literature in the colonial age.

1. The task to which those men and women gave themselves—the colonization of America—was, under all the circumstances of the time, a very hard one, slow, wearisome, menaced by nearly every form of danger, full of awe even for stout hearts. Their earliest motive for writing books was bound up in a natural and even pathetic desire to send back news of themselves to the old world—that safe, regulated, populous world—which they had left behind them when they sailed out toward the risks and mysteries of the great ocean and of the still greater wilderness which lay hidden in the shadow beyond it. This gives us our first group of American writings, and explains for us a multitude of titles in that primal period—the

[1] James Russell Lowell, "The Biglow Papers," Second Series, 68.

books written upon the instant of arrival, and at intervals afterward, with the purpose of sending home tidings of welfare or of ill fare.

2. Close to this was the fact that for all of them the supreme legal authority, and for some of them also the source of pecuniary supply, were at home; and thither they occasionally made appeal from the hot controversies into which at times they fell, pleading their causes before a tribunal across the sea, in eager and rough-hewn narratives, which still throb with the passions that prompted them, and are authentic pictures of the thought and the life of those rugged days.

3. It was of the utmost importance that the new settlements in America should be reënforced in population by steady accessions from the dense multitudes of the old world, especially of the mother-land; and this obviously depended on the maintenance there of their good repute. But their good repute in England was assailed from time to time by certain ill-conditioned persons, who, having come to America, and having left it again either in discontent or under compulsion, sought vengeance in the publication of injurious accounts of the country, the climate, and the people. Curiously enough, also, there were in England certain other persons—old Crashawe[1] quaintly classified them at the time as "the papists, the players, and the devil"—who manifested a dislike toward the American settlements not now easy to be accounted for, and who were very busy in swelling the chorus of bad words concerning them. The necessity of repelling these charges prompted in part the composition of some of the books included in the first two groups, and also developed a distinct class of writings—that of American Apologetics.

4. Furthermore, those uncouth dusky creatures, the savage proprietors of the continent, whom, both in friend-

[1] "A New Year's Gift to Virginia," by W. Crashawe, B.D., London, 1610. This tract is without paging.

ship and in hostility, the colonists at once came in contact with, for a long time seemed to our ancestors to be most mysterious beings, and were the objects of an unspeakable interest in England as well as here. What were those creatures? Were they indeed human beings? But if human beings, they must of course be descended from Adam; and if descended from Adam, how did they get to America? And when did they come? And what had they been doing in America all this time? What, moreover, were their forms of government, their laws, their languages, their creeds, their domestic usages, their means of livelihood, the extent of their intellectual development? Above all things, if they indeed had souls, could they not be reached by the Christian message which would save their souls? To us, of course, the American Indian is no longer a mysterious or even an interesting personage—he is simply a fierce dull biped standing in our way; and it is only by a strong effort of the imagination that we can in any degree reproduce for ourselves the zest of ineffable curiosity with which, during the most of the seventeenth century, he was regarded by the English on both sides of the ocean. Scarcely a book was written here on any subject into which he was not somehow introduced; and there remains to us a large class of writings—our fourth group—particularly devoted to him, and to the rather melancholy experiences of the white people in trying to live in his neighborhood.

5. Neither must it be forgotten that there was in the seventeenth century, both for those who came to America and for those who remained in England, the enchantment of utter novelty in the wild, magnificent, tender, or terrifying aspects of nature, which a voyage over the Atlantic and a residence in the new world would present—the new heavens and the new earth which they then beheld for the first time, the stupendous empire of unexplored wildernesses, the unwonted wrath of earthquakes, thunders, and winds, the new vegetation, the new specimens of beast

and bird and fish, and whatever vision they had of majesty or loveliness in the American landscapes. Thus we have as our fifth group of writings the books descriptive of nature in America.

6. There was still another realm of novelty in America that the people of England desired to look into—the new organization of society which the altered conditions of life in the new world compelled the English colonists to develop, their gradual innovations in politics, laws, creeds, in religious and domestic usages, the new crystallization of church and state slowly working itself clear in the English kingdom of America.

7. The several groups of writings which have been mentioned thus far, sprang in considerable measure from motives looking toward the love, or the interest, or the authority of the people of England, from whom those earliest Americans had but recently withdrawn themselves. These groups of writings, however, by no means constitute a moiety of American literature even in our first period. By far the larger portion of our writings were composed for our own people alone, and with reference to our own interests, inspirations, and needs. These include, first, sermons and other religious treatises; second, histories; and third, poetry and some examples of miscellaneous prose.

III.

Since the earliest English colonists upon these shores began to make a literature as soon as they arrived here, it follows that we can fix the exact date of the birth of American literature. It is that year 1607, when Englishmen, by transplanting themselves to America, first began to be Americans. Thus may the history of our literature be traced back from the present hour, as it recedes along the track of our national life, through the early days of the republic, through five generations of colonial existence, until, in the first decade of the seventeenth century,

it is merged in its splendid parentage—the written speech of England. And the birth-epoch of American literature was a fortunate one: it was amid the full magnificence of the Elizabethan period, whose creative vitality, whose superb fruitage, reached forward and cast their glory across the entire generation succeeding the death of Elizabeth herself. The first lispings of American literature were heard along the sands of the Chesapeake and near the gurgling tides of the James River, at the very time when the firmament of English literature was all ablaze with the light of her full-orbed and most wonderful writers, the wits, the dramatists, scholars, orators, singers, philosophers, who formed that incomparable group of titanic men gathered in London during the earlier years of the seventeenth century; when the very air of London must have been electric with the daily words of those immortals, whose casual talk upon the pavement by the street-side was a coinage of speech richer, more virile, more expressive, than has been known on this planet since the great days of Athenian poetry, eloquence, and mirth.

I find it hard to hasten past this event—the dawn upon the world of American literature and of American civilization. It is pleasant to trace in contemporaneous English literature some tokens of the interest which the English people of that day took in the romantic and perilous enterprise of laying the foundations of a new English commonwealth beyond the ocean, and of extending the domain of their own speech into lands remote and illimitable. All along during the latter half of the reign of Elizabeth attempt after attempt had been made by her indomitable subjects to get a foothold in that portion of America which she claimed as hers and which in her honor was named Virginia. All these attempts had failed, some of them tragically. In the very last year of her reign, however, a glorious old English sailor had come back to England with the great tidings that he had found it possible to make the voyage to Virginia by shooting his

ships straight to the west, thus avoiding the tedious, costly, sickly route thither by way of the West Indies. This bit of news sent a thrill of excitement through England; it was talked over at innumerable firesides; it caused a great buzz and fluttering among the merchants and bankers on the London Exchange; it was caught up and tossed about on the stage of the London theatres, which then had the function now filled by daily newspapers for the public discussion of current events.[1] From that moment a fresh impulse was given to the interest of Englishmen in Virginia—their own vast, unpossessed, barbaric empire, now made more accessible to them, and supposed by them to be fat with gold and precious stones and all sorts of unimaginable treasures.[2] Multitudes of Englishmen became eager to go to Virginia, even as in our own time, from the same quenchless passion for swiftly gotten wealth, we have seen men eager to go to the gold fields of California and Australia. And year by year during the early portion of the reign of James the First, the desire for a new attempt to get possession of Virginia crept up among the highest classes, and down among the lowest; and in April of the year 1606 a royal patent was conferred on certain "firm and hearty lovers" of colonization, giving them power to conduct a colony thither. Then once more the good work went forward with vigor and glee. All the summer and all the autumn of that year were spent in making ready the intended expedition. For several weeks before setting sail, the three vessels that were to carry the colonists had waited in the Thames while the managers were completing their preparations. During that time the eyes of all London were upon them; prayers for their safety were offered in the churches; and one of the mighty poets of England, Michael Drayton, poured into a noble

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[1] E. D. Neill, "Hist. of Va. Co. of London," vi.

[2] John Marston's Works, Halliwell's ed., 1856, Vol. III., play of "Eastward Ho."

ode the high hope, the anxiety, the ambition, the eager sympathy, with which all ranks of thoughtful and watchful Englishmen were sending the travellers out upon their great quest.

"You brave heroic minds,
Worthy your country's name,
That honor still pursue,
Whilst loit'ring hinds
Lurk here at home with shame,
Go and subdue.

Britons, you stay too long:
Quickly aboard bestow you;
And with a merry gale
Swell your stretch'd sail
With vows as strong
As the winds that blow you.

. . . . . .

And cheerfully at sea,
Success you still entice,
To get the pearl and gold;
And ours to hold;
Virginia,
Earth's only paradise.

. . . . . .

In kenning of the shore,
Thanks to God first given,
O you the happiest men,
Be frolic then;
Let cannons roar,
Frighting the wide heaven.

And in regions far
Such heroes bring ye forth,
As those from whom we came;
And plant our name
Under that star
Not known unto our north."

Thus far in his ode, the poet gives voice merely to the sturdy joy which by nature every Englishman has in daring adventure, in the victories of heroism, in the hope of a vast enlargement of his country's wealth and imperial sway. But this grand old Elizabethan singer could not stifle another ambition—the ambition that England might win for herself in America even nobler trophies than those of political dominion and material wealth. With the pride of an English poet and of an English man of letters, he utters in a single stanza the superb prediction of a new English literature to spring up in that far-off land. In poetic vision he then foresaw, and he hailed and greeted from afar, the unborn poets that were to rise beyond the Atlantic, and, under new constellations as he supposed, were to create a new empire of English letters:

"And as there plenty grows
Of laurel everywhere,—
Apollo's sacred tree,
You, it may see,
A poet's brows
To crown, that may sing there." [1]

[1] Works of Drayton, Anderson's ed., 583.

CHAPTER II.

VIRGINIA: THE FIRST WRITER.

I.—The arrival in America of the first Americans—A fortunate blunder—Satisfaction with their new home.

II.—The sort of men they were—Their leaders—Captain John Smith—His previous career—His character—His important relation to early American settlements—The first writer in American literature.

III.—His first book—Its publication in London in 1608—A literary synchronism—American literature and John Milton—Synopsis of the book—Notable passages—The fable of his rescue by Pocahontas—The place of the book at the head of American literature—Summary of its literary traits.

IV.—His second American writing—A bold letter to his London patrons—His knowledge refusing to be commanded by their ignorance—The kind of men to make good colonists of—Early symptoms of American recalcitrance.

V.—His third American work—Vivid pictures of Virginia—The climate—The country—The productions—The Indians—His fine statement of the utility of the Virginian enterprise.

VI.—Captain John Smith's return to England—His subsequent career—A baffled explorer—His pride in the American colonies—Utilized by the playwrights—Thomas Fuller's sarcastic account of him—His champions—Final estimate.

I.

THE three little ships which bore so many hopes, dropping from London down the Thames on the 20th of December,[1] 1606, were vexed by opposing winds and were kept shivering within sight of the English coast for several weeks; then, instead of pursuing the straightforward westerly course to America, they curved southward, meandering foolishly by the Canaries, Dominica, Guadeloupe and elsewhere, to the great loss of time, food, health, and patience; and did not reach their journey's end until the 26th of April, 1607—a journey's end to which they were at last blown by the providence of a rough storm, after

[1] George Percy, in Purchas, IV. 1685.

"the mariners had three days passed their reckoning and found no land."[1] No blunder in man's performance could have been more happily condoned by Heaven's pity; for these poor little ships, groping along the coast of America in great geographic darkness, and seeking only "to find out a safe port in the entrance of some navigable river,"[2] were guided by the finger of Him who points out the tracks of the winds and the courses of national destiny, into the noblest bay along the whole coast, and upon a land of balm and verdure. They had come to Virginia at the happy moment when nature in that region wears her sweetest smile and sings her loveliest notes. They were amazed, as one[3] of them tells us, at the opulence of life visible all about them; at the oysters "which lay on the ground as thick as stones," many with pearls in them; at the earth "all flowing over with fair flowers of sundry colors and kinds, as though it had been in any garden or orchard in England;" at "the woods full of cedar and cypress trees, with other trees which issue out sweet gums, like to balsam." "Heaven and earth," exclaimed another[4] of that delighted company, "never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation."

II.

Thus began our American civilization; and among those first Englishmen huddled together behind palisadoes in Jamestown in 1607, were some who laid the foundations of American literature. There were about a hundred of them all. As we look over the ancient list of their names and designations, we alight upon some facts which bode little good to an enterprise in which there is no safe room for persons afflicted with constitutional objections to hard

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[1] Capt. J. Smith, "Gen. Hist." I. 150.
[2] From their Instructions, given in Neill, "Hist. Va. Co. Lond." 9.
[3] George Percy, in Purchas, IV. 1688.
[4] Capt. J. Smith, "Gen. Hist." I. 114.

work. The earliest formal History of Virginia[1] contains testimony that herein lay the worst peril of the enterprise; that besides one carpenter, two blacksmiths, two sailors, and a few others named "laborers," "all the rest were poor gentlemen, tradesmen, serving-men, libertines, and such like, ten times more fit to spoil a commonwealth than either begin one, or but help to maintain one." But in this heterogeneous party of forcible Feebles, were a few men of some grip and note, such as brave old Bartholomew Gosnold, Edward Maria Wingfield, John Martin, Gabriel Archer, Robert Hunt their saintly chaplain, and George Percy a brother of the Earl of Northumberland. And there was one other man in that little group of adventurers who still has a considerable name in the world. In that year 1607, when he first set foot in Virginia, Captain John Smith was only twenty-seven years old; but even then he had made himself somewhat famous in England as a daring traveller in Southern Europe, in Turkey and the East. He was perhaps the last professional knight-errant that the world saw; a free lance, who could not hear of a fight going on anywhere in the world without hastening to have a hand in it; a sworn champion of the ladies also, all of whom he loved too ardently to be guilty of the invidious offence of marrying any one of them; a restless, vain, ambitious, overbearing, blustering fellow, who made all men either his hot friends or his hot enemies; a man who down to the present hour has his celebrity in the world chiefly on account of alleged exploits among Turks, Tartars, and Indians, of which exploits he alone has furnished the history—never failing to celebrate himself in them all as the one resplendent and invincible hero.

This extremely vivid and resolute man comes before us now for particular study, not because he was the most conspicuous person in the first successful American colony, but because he was the writer of the first book in Amer-

[1] Capt. J. Smith, "Gen. Hist." I. 241.

ican literature. It is impossible to doubt that as a story-teller he fell into the traveller's habit of drawing a long bow. In the narration of incidents that had occurred in his own wild life he had an aptitude for being intensely interesting; and it seemed to be his theory that if the original facts were not in themselves quite so interesting as they should have been, so much the worse for the original facts. Yet in spite of this habit, Captain John Smith had many great and magnanimous qualities; and we surely cannot help being drawn to him with affectionate admiration, when we remember his large services in the work of colonizing both Virginia and New England, his sufferings in that cause, and his unquenchable love for it until death. In his later life, after he had been baffled in many of his plans and hopes, he wrote, in London, of the American colonies these words: "By that acquaintance I have with them, I call them my children; for they have been my wife, my hawks, hounds, my cards, my dice, and in total my best content, as indifferent to my heart as my left hand to my right." [1]

Then, too, as students of literature we shall be drawn to Captain John Smith as belonging to that noble type of manhood of which the Elizabethan period produced so many examples—the man of action who was also a man of letters, the man of letters who was also a man of action: the wholesomest type of manhood anywhere to be found; body and brain both active, both cultivated; the mind not made fastidious and morbid by too much bookishness, nor coarse and dull by too little; not a doer who is dumb, not a speech-maker who cannot do; the knowledge that comes of books widened and freshened by the knowledge that comes of experience; the literary sense fortified by common sense; the bashfulness and delicacy of the scholar

[1] Smith's "Gen. Hist." in Pinkerton, XIII. 245. He adds, in the plain English of the period: "for all their discoveries I have yet heard of are but pigs of my own sow."

hovering as a finer presence above the forceful audacity of the man of the world; at once bookman, penman, swordsman, diplomat, sailor, courtier, orator. Of this type of manhood, spacious, strong, refined, and sane, were the best men of the Elizabethan time, George Gascoigne, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, and in a modified sense Hakluyt, Bacon, Sackville, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and nearly all the rest. To this type of manhood Captain John Smith aspired to belong. "Many of the most eminent warriors," said he, "what their swords did, their pens writ. Though I be never so much their inferior, yet I hold it no great error to follow good examples."[1] In another book,[2] he expanded the thought in a way that shows it to have been a pleasant one to him: "This history . . . might and ought to have been clad in better robes than my rude military hand can cut out in paper ornaments; but because of the most things therein I am no compiler by hearsay but have been a real actor, I take myself to have a property in them, and therefore have been bold to challenge them to come under the reach of my own rough pen." And that he had achieved his ambition for this spherical form of excellence was the belief of many of his contemporaries, one of whom wrote thus of him and of his book on the history of Virginia and New England:

> "Like Cæsar now thou writ'st what thou hast done,
> These acts, this book, will live while there's a sun."[3]

III.

Captain John Smith became a somewhat prolific author;[4] but while nearly all of his books have a leading

[1] Dedication of "True Travels."

[2] "General History," I. 57.

[3] Capt. J. Smith's "General History," I. 65.

[4] For a complete list of his writings, see Charles Deane's ed. of Smith's "True Relation," Preface, xlvi.

reference to America, only three of them were written during the period of his residence as a colonist in America. Only these three, therefore, can be claimed by us as belonging to the literature of our country.

The first of these books, "A True Relation of Virginia,"[1] is of deep interest to us, not only on account of its graphic style and the strong light it throws upon the very beginning of our national history, but as being unquestionably the earliest book in American literature. It was written during the first thirteen months of the life of the first American colony, and gives a simple and picturesque account of the stirring events which took place there during that time, under his own eye. It was probably carried to London by Captain Nelson of the good ship Phœnix, which sailed from Jamestown on the second of June, 1608; and it was published in London and sold "at the Grey-hound in Paul's Church-Yard," in the latter part of the same year—not far from the very day when the child John Milton was born, and in a house only three streets distant. Perhaps I may be pardoned for indulging what will seem to some a mere literary caprice, by placing these two events side by side in this history, even as they were placed side by side in the happenings of actual fact. John Milton was born into life, and the first American book was born into print, in the same year, and in the same part of the year, and almost on the same spot. The child born on that ninth of December, 1608, in Bread Street, a few steps from the book-shop where the earliest of American writings was first placed on sale—the child around whose cradle may have been repeated by his father some of the wild and exciting incidents related in that book—was to grow up into a colossal literary figure not only in that century but in all centuries: he was to be in an eminent degree the exponent of the great ideas of

[1] Reprinted, Boston, 1866, and edited in his own admirable manner, with fulness of learning and great accuracy, by Charles Deane.

religious and political freedom that were to form the basis of American civilization, which, like himself, was then beginning to live; and the moral peculiarities of his genius, austere earnestness, a devout ethical force, an obstinate habit of judging of life and even of art and letters from the throne of moral laws and of moral tendencies, were to be likewise the most marked spiritual qualities of that remote and unfriended national literature which began its career almost at the very same moment when he began his, and almost on the very same spot.

The title-pages of the seventeenth century are not the least expressive or amusing portions of the books of that century; and if ever an old title-page shall deserve full quotation at our hands, this does so. It is as follows: "A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of note as hath happened in Virginia since the first planting of that colony, which is now resident in the South part thereof, till the last return from thence. Written by Captain Smith, Coronel of the said colony, to a worshipful friend of his in England. London: Printed for John Tappe, and are to be sold at the Grey-hound in Paul's Church-Yard, by W. W. 1608."

Barely hinting at the length and tediousness of the sea-voyage, the author plunges with epic promptitude into the midst of the action by describing their arrival in Virginia, their first ungentle passages with the Indians, their selection of a place of settlement, their first civil organization, their first expedition for discovery toward the upper waters of the James River, the first formidable Indian attack upon their village, and the first return for England, two months after their arrival, of the ships that had brought them to Virginia. Upon the departure of these ships, bitter quarrels broke out among the colonists; "things were neither carried with that discretion nor any business effected in such good sort as wisdom would; . . . through which disorder, God being angry with us plagued us with such famine and sickness that the living

were scarce able to bury the dead. . . . As yet we had no houses to cover us; our tents were rotten, and our cabins worse than nought. . . . The president and Captain Martin's sickness compelled me to be cape-merchant,[1] and yet to spare no pains in making houses for the company, who, notwithstanding our misery, little ceased their malice, grudging, and muttering . . . being in such despair as they would rather starve and rot with idleness than be persuaded to do anything for their own relief without constraint."[2] But the energetic Captain had an eager passion for making tours of exploration along the coast and up the rivers; and after telling how he procured corn from the Indians and thus supplied the instant necessities of the starving colonists, he proceeds to relate the history of a tour of discovery made by him up the Chickahominy, on which tour happened the famous incident of his falling into captivity among the Indians. The reader will not fail to notice that in this earliest book of his, written before Powhatan's daughter, the princess Pocahontas, had become celebrated in England, and before Captain Smith had that enticing motive for representing himself as specially favored by her, he speaks of Powhatan as full of friendliness to him; he expressly states that his own life was in no danger at the hands of that Indian potentate; and of course he has no situation on which to hang the romantic incident of his rescue by Pocahontas from impending death.[3] Having ascended the Chickahominy about sixty miles, he took with him a single Indian guide and pushed into the woods. Within a quarter of an hour he "heard a loud cry and a hallooing of Indians;" and almost immediately he was assaulted by two hundred of them, led by Opechancanough, an under-king to the emperor Powhatan. The valiant Captain, in a contest so

[1] Treasurer.

[2] "True Relation," Deane's ed., 12-15.

[3] This pretty story has now lost historical credit, and is generally given up by critical students of our early history.

unequal, certainly was entitled to a shield; and this he rather ungenerously extemporized by seizing his Indian guide and with his garters binding the Indian's arm to his own hand, thus, as he coolly expresses it, making "my hind" "my barricado." As the Indians still pressed toward him, Captain Smith discharged his pistol, which wounded some of his assailants and taught them all a wholesome respect by the terror of its sound; then, after much parley, he surrendered to them, and was carried off prisoner to a place about six miles distant. There he expected to be at once put to death, but was agreeably surprised by being treated with the utmost kindness. For supper that night they gave him "a quarter of venison and some ten pound of bread;" and each morning thereafter three women presented him with "three great platters of fine bread," and "more venison than ten men could devour." "Though eight ordinarily guarded me, I wanted not what they could devise to content me; and still our larger acquaintance increased our better affection."[1] After many days spent in travelling hither and yon with his captors, he was at last, by his own request, delivered up to Powhatan, the over-lord of all that region. He gives a picturesque description of the barbaric state in which he was received by this potent chieftain, whom he found "proudly lying upon a bedstead a foot high, upon ten or twelve mats," the emperor himself being "richly hung with many chains of great pearls about his neck, and covered with a great covering of raccoon skins. At head sat a woman; at his feet, another; on each side, sitting upon a mat upon the ground were ranged his chief men on each side the fire, ten in a rank; and behind them, as many young women, each a great chain of white beads over their shoulders, their heads painted in red; and with such a grave and majestical countenance as drave me into admiration to see such state in a naked salvage. He kindly welcomed

[1] "True Relation of Va." 22-33.

me with good words, and great platters of sundry victuals, assuring me his friendship and my liberty within four days." Thus day by day passed in pleasant discourse with his imperial host, who asked him about "the manner of our ships, and sailing the seas, the earth and skies, and of our God," and who feasted him not only with continual "platters of sundry victuals," but with glowing descriptions of his own vast dominions stretching away beyond the rivers and the mountains to the land of the setting sun. "Seeing what pride he had in his great and spacious dominions, . . . I requited his discourse in describing to him the territories of Europe which was subject to our great king, . . . the innumerable multitude of his ships. I gave him to understand the noise of trumpets and terrible manner of fighting were under Captain Newport my father. . . . Thus having with all the kindness he could devise sought to content me, he sent me home with four men, one that usually carried my gown and knapsack after me, two other loaded with bread, and one to accompany me."[1] The author then gives a description of his journey back to Jamestown, where "each man with truest signs of joy" welcomed him; of his second visit to Powhatan; of various encounters with hostile and thievish Indians; and of the arrival from England of Captain Nelson in the Phœnix, April the twentieth, 1608—an event which "did ravish" them "with exceeding joy." Late in the narrative he makes his first reference to Pocahontas, whom he speaks of as "a child of ten years old, which not only for feature, countenance and proportion much exceedeth any of the rest of his people, but for wit and spirit the only nonpareil of his country."[2] After mentioning some further dealings with the Indians, he concludes the book with an account of the preparations for the return to England of Captain Nelson and his ship;

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[1] "True Relation of Va." 33-38.

[2] Ibid. 72-73.

and describes those remaining as "being in good health, all our men well contented, free from mutinies, in love one with another, and as we hope in a continual peace with the Indians, where we doubt not but by God's gracious assistance and the adventurers' willing minds and speedy furtherance to so honorable an action in after times, to see our nation to enjoy a country, not only exceeding pleasant for habitation, but also very profitable for commerce in general, no doubt pleasing to Almighty God, honorable to our gracious sovereign, and commodious generally to the whole kingdom."[1]

Thus, with words of happy omen, ends the first book in American literature. It is a book that was written, not in lettered ease, nor in "the still air of delightful studies," but under a rotten tent in the wilderness, perhaps by the flickering blaze of a pine knot, in the midst of tree-stumps and the filth and clamor of a pioneer's camp, and within the fragile palisades which alone shielded the little band of colonists from the ever-hovering peril of an Indian massacre. It was not composed as a literary effort. It was meant to be merely a budget of information for the public at home, and especially for the London stockholders of the Virginia Company. Hastily, apparently without revision, it was wrought vehemently by the rough hand of a soldier and an explorer, in the pauses of a toil that was both fatiguing and dangerous, and while the incidents which he records were fresh and clinging in his memory. Probably he thought little of any rules of literary art as he wrote this book: probably he did not think of writing a book at all. Out of the abundance of his materials, glowing with pride over what he had done in the great enterprise, eager to inspire the home-keeping patrons of the colony with his own resolute cheer, and accustomed for years to portray in pithy English the adventures of which his life was fated to be full, the bluff Captain just stabbed

[1] "True Relation of Va." 76–77.

his paper with inken words; he composed not a book but a big letter; he folded it up, and tossed it upon the deck of Captain Nelson's departing ship. But though he may have had no expectation of doing such a thing, he wrote a book that is not unworthy to be the beginning of the new English literature in America. It has faults enough, without doubt. Had it not these, it would have been too good for the place it occupies. The composition was extemporaneous; there appears in it some chronic misunderstanding between the nominatives and their verbs; now and then the words and clauses of a sentence are jumbled together in blinding heaps; but in spite of all its crudities, here is racy English, pure English, the sinewy, picturesque and throbbing diction of the navigators and soldiers of the Elizabethan time. And although the materials of this book are not moulded in nice proportion, the story is well told. The man has an eye and a hand for that thing. He sees the essential facts of a situation, and throws the rest away; and the business moves straight forward.

IV.

About three months after the departure for England of the ship which carried to the printing-press the book of which an extended account has just been given, there arrived from England another ship, bringing a new supply of colonists, and bringing likewise a letter of fantastic instructions and of querulous complaints from the London stockholders of the company. It fell to Captain John Smith, as the new president of the colony, to make reply to this document; and he did it in the production which forms the second title in our list of his American writings. This production is brief; but it is a most vigorous, trenchant, and characteristic piece of writing, a transcript of the intense spirit of the man who wrote it, all ablaze with the light it casts into that primal hot-bed of wrangling, indolence, and misery, the village of Jamestown. Let us

reproduce some parts of this letter, the sentences of which seem to fly as straight and hard as bullets:—"I received your letter wherein you write that our minds are so set upon faction and idle conceits in dividing the country without your consents; and that we feed you but with if's and and's, hopes, and some few proofs, as if we would keep the mystery of the business to ourselves; and that we must expressly follow your instructions sent by Captain Newport, the charge of whose voyage amounts to near two thousand pounds,—the which if we cannot defray by the ship's return, we are alike to remain as banished men. To these particulars, I humbly entreat your pardons if I offend you with my rude answer. For our factions, . . . I cannot prevent them. . . . For the idle letter sent to my Lord of Salisbury by the president and his confederates for dividing the country and so forth, what it was I know not; for you saw no hand of mine to it, nor ever dreamt I of any such matter. That we feed you with hopes and so forth, though I be no scholar, I am past a school-boy; and I desire but to know what either you and these here do know, but that I have learned to tell you by the continual hazard of my life. I have not concealed from you anything I know. . . . Expressly to follow your instructions by Captain Newport, though they be performed, I was directly against it; but . . . I was content to be overruled by the major part of the council, I fear to the hazard of us all; which now is generally confessed, when it is too late. . . . For the charge of this voyage of two or three thousand pounds, we have not received the value of an hundred pounds. . . . From your ship we had not provision in victuals worth twenty pound; and we are more than two hundred to live upon this,—the one half sick, the other little better. For the sailors, I confess they daily make good cheer; but our diet is a little meal and water, and not sufficient of that. Though there be fish in the sea, fowls in the air, and beasts in the woods, their bounds are so large, they so wild, and we so weak and ignorant, we

cannot much trouble them. . . . Captain Ratcliffe is now called Sicklemore. . . . I have sent you him home, lest the company should cut his throat. . . . When you send again, I entreat you rather send but thirty carpenters, husbandmen, gardeners, fishermen, blacksmiths, masons, and diggers up of trees' roots, well provided, than a thousand of such as we have; for except we be able both to lodge them and feed them, the most will consume with want of necessaries, before they can be made good for anything. . . . These are the causes that have kept us in Virginia from laying such a foundation that ere this might have given much better content and satisfaction; but as yet you must not look for any profitable returns. So I humbly rest." [1]

Such are the principal portions of Captain John Smith's letter of explanation to the London proprietors of the company whose affairs in Virginia he was just then conducting. Certainly this writing is racy, terse, fearless; a style of sentence carved out by a sword; the incisive speech of a man of action; Hotspur rhetoric, jerking with impatience, truculence, and noble wrath. And it is not without an under-meaning in many ways, that this production, among the very earliest in American literature, should communicate to England a foretaste of what proved to be the incurable American habit of talking back to her. From the beginning, it was hard for England to see the just limits of her interference with her own colonial children in America; and though three thousand miles away from them, she could not stay her motherly tongue from advising and commanding them concerning the details of their life in the wilderness about which they inevitably knew more than she did. One can easily imagine what a shock this epistolary retort of Captain John Smith must have given to the dignified nerves of those kindly and lordly patrons in London; how its saucy sentences must have made them gasp and stare. Almost the earliest note,

[1] Printed in Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." I. 200–203.

then, of American literature is a note of unsubmissiveness. Captain John Smith's letter, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, is a premonitory symptom of the Declaration of Independence.

V.

In the same parcel with this remarkable letter of Captain Smith's was enclosed by him to the adventurers in London another document—a proof of his irrepressible activity and of his versatile talent—a "Map of the Bay and the Rivers, with an annexed Relation of the countries, and nations that inhabit them."[1] This document did not get into print until 1612, when it was published at Oxford, and constitutes the third work in the list of the author's American writings. It deals with the climate and topography of Virginia, with its fauna and flora, and particularly with the characteristics of its earlier inhabitants, the Indians. As a whole the work is uncommonly picturesque and even amusing; for though devoted to climatic and topographic descriptions, to matters of natural history, and to the coarse features of savage existence, the genius of the writer quickens and brightens it all, strewing his pages with easy and delightful strokes of imagery, quaint humor, shrewdness, and a sort of rough unconscious grace. His introductory chapter is full of the joy which the first visitors to this country felt in the sweet air, the rich soil, the waters, the mountains, in all the large and majestic framework of nature in the new world: "The temperature of this country doth agree well with English constitutions. . . . The summer is hot as in Spain; the winter cold as in France or England. . . . The winds here are variable; but the like thunder and lightning to purify the air, I have seldom either seen or heard in Europe. . . . There is but one entrance by sea into this country, and

[1] Reprinted with some alterations of text in Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." I. 113–148.

that is at the mouth of a very goodly bay, eighteen or twenty miles broad. . . . Within is a country that may have the prerogative over the most pleasant places known, for large and pleasant navigable rivers. . . . Here are mountains, hills, plains, valleys, rivers and brooks all running most pleasantly into a fair bay, compassed, but for the mouth, with fruitful and delightsome land. In the bay and rivers are many isles, both great and small. . . . The mountains are of divers natures; for at the head of the bay the rocks are of a composition like mill-stones, some of marble and so forth. And many pieces like crystal we found, as thrown down by water from those mountains. . . . These waters wash from the rocks such glistering tinctures that the ground in some places seemeth as gilded; where both the rocks and the earth are so splendent to behold that better judgments than ours might have been persuaded they contained more than probabilities. The vesture of the earth in most places doth manifestly prove the nature of the soil to be lusty and very rich."[1]

This charming passage, pregnant with adroit hints, must have proved very seductive when it came to be read in England; it must have made many an eye sparkle with the expectation of golden returns from this mysterious new realm of theirs, all bulging and variegated with precious metals and precious stones. And the passage just quoted contains, likewise, not a few of the best traits of the author's descriptive manner, which is vital with the breath of imagination, and tinted with the very hues of nature. One has not to go far along the sentences elsewhere in this book without finding all the dull and hard details of his subject made delightful by felicities of phrase that seem to spring up as easily as wild flowers in the woods of his own Virginia. He speaks of "an infinite number of small rundels and pleasant springs that disperse themselves for the best service as do the veins of a man's body;"[2]

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[1] From the reprint in Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." I. 113–115

[2] Ibid. I. 116.

of "a bay wherein falleth three or four pretty brooks and creeks that half intrench the inhabitants of Warraskoyac;"[1] of the river Pamaunkee that "divideth itself into two gallant branches;"[2] of the river Patawomeke "fed . . . with many sweet rivers and springs which fall from the bordering hills."[3] There is often a quaint flavor in his words—that racy and piquant simplicity which so much charms us in the English descriptive prose of the sixteenth century, and the first third of the seventeenth. He speaks of a plum called Putchamins, which when unripe "will draw a man's mouth awry with much torment;"[4] of the Indian men of Virginia who "wear half their beards shaven, the other half long; for barbers they use their women, who with two shells will grate away the hair of any fashion they please."[5] Referring to the personal ornaments of the Indians, he mentions that "in each ear commonly they have three great holes, whereat they hang chains, bracelets, or copper. Some of their men wear in those holes a small green and yellow colored snake, near half a yard in length, which crawling and lapping herself about his neck oftentimes familiarly would kiss his lips. Others wear a dead rat tied by the tail."[6] "The men bestow their times in fishing, hunting, wars, and such manlike exercises, scorning to be seen in any woman-like exercise, which is the cause that the women be very painful, and the men often idle."[7] He says that "for their music they use a thick cane, on which they pipe as on a recorder. . . . But their chief instruments are rattles made of small gourds or pumpions' shells. . . . These mingled with their voices sometimes twenty or thirty together, make such a terrible noise as would rather affright than delight any man."[8] He describes their orators as making speeches of welcome to a public guest, "testifying their love . . . with such vehemency, and so great

[1] Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." I. 116. [2] Ibid. I. 117.
[3] Ibid. I. 118. [4] Ibid. I. 122. [5] Ibid. I. 129.
[6] Ibid. I. 130. [7] Ibid. I. 131. [8] Ibid. I. 136.

passions that they sweat till they drop, and are so out of breath that they can scarce speak; so that a man would take them to be exceeding angry or stark mad."[1] He tells of a certain Indian king who "did believe that our God as much exceeded theirs as our guns did their bows and arrows; and many times did send to me to Jamestown, entreating me to pray to my God for rain, for their gods would not send them any."[2] Remembering those tender-fingered drones calling themselves "gentlemen" who constituted so large and so useless a portion of the first colonists in Virginia, one cannot help relishing the frequent sarcasms with which this impetuous and indomitable man spices his references to them; in one place characterizing them as persons who never "did anything but devour the fruits of other men's labor;" and who, "because they found not English cities, nor such fair houses, nor at their own wishes any of their accustomed dainties, with feather beds and down pillows, taverns and alehouses in every breathing place, neither such plenty of gold and silver and dissolute liberty as they expected, had little or no care of anything but to pamper their bellies, to fly away with our pinnaces, or procure their means to return for England; for the country was to them a misery, a ruin, a death, a hell."[3]

There are in this book some specimens of portrait-painting that show no slight power. Let us take, for example, his description of the appearance and state of the famous Indian king, Powhatan: "He is of personage a tall well-proportioned man, with a sour look, his head somewhat gray, his beard so thin that it seemeth none at all, his age near sixty; of a very able and hardy body to endure any labor. About his person ordinarily attendeth a guard of forty or fifty of the tallest men his country doth afford. Every night upon the four quarters of his house are four sentinels, each from other a slight shoot, and at every half

[1] Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." I. 136, 137.
[2] Ibid. I. 141. [3] Ibid. I. 145.

hour one from the *corps de garde* doth halloo, shaking his lips with his finger between them; unto whom every sentinel doth answer round from his stand. If any fail, they presently send forth an officer that beateth him extremely."[1] Here, likewise, is some effective description in his account of the Susquehanna Indians, whom he encountered on one of his tours of discovery, and whose huge shapes and strange costumes appear to have impressed him greatly: "But to proceed, sixty of those Susquehannocks came to us with skins, bows, arrows, targets, beads, swords, and tobacco pipes for presents. Such great and well proportioned men are seldom seen; for they seemed like giants to the English, yea and to the neighbors, yet seemed of an honest and simple disposition, with much ado restrained from adoring us as gods. Those are the strangest people of all those countries, both in language and attire. For their language, it may well beseem their proportions, sounding from them as a voice in a vault. Their attire is the skins of bears and wolves. . . . One had the head of a wolf hanging in a chain for a jewel, his tobacco pipe three quarters of a yard long . . . sufficient to beat out one's brains; with bows, arrows, and clubs suitable to their greatness. . . . The picture of the greatest of them is signified in the map; the calf of whose leg was three quarters of a yard about, and all the rest of his limbs so answerable to that proportion that he seemed the goodliest man we ever saw."[2]

Near the end of this little book occurs one sentence in which the author has admirably compacted a statement of all the nobler utilities of the young colony of Virginia: "So, then, here is a place, a nurse for soldiers, a practice for mariners, a trade for merchants, a reward for the good; and that which is most of all, a business, most acceptable to God, to bring such poor infidels to the knowledge of God and his holy gospel."[3]

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[1] Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." I. 142, 143.
[2] Ibid. I. 119, 120. [3] Ibid. I. 128.

We may be well content to let this strong and beautiful sentence linger in our memories as the last one we shall draw from Captain John Smith's American writings, and as an honorable token of his broad and clear grasp of the meaning of that great national impulse which stirred the heart of England in his time, for the founding of a new English empire in America.

VI.

The book which we have just inspected is the third work written by Captain John Smith in America; and as students of American literature, we must here end our study of his writings. He remained in Virginia about twelve months after the time to which the latest of these writings refers, returning to England in the fall of 1609. It is not improbable that he was recalled to England by the displeasure of the London proprietors of the Virginia company. Dropped from their service, he remained in England until 1614, when with two ships he made a voyage of trade and exploration to New England, and came back the same year with a map, drawn by himself, of the country between the Penobscot and Cape Cod. In the year 1615 he sailed again for New England, taking with him a colony for settlement there; but on the voyage out he was captured by a French pirate and carried prisoner to Rochelle, whence he soon escaped and made his way back to England. From that time until his death in 1631 he probably never left England again. His career of daring adventure was over. Though he continued to take the most passionate interest in American colonization, and to agitate and plot and strive for it, he had to appease his restless spirit with the tame joys of authorship. He appears to have been looked upon henceforward as the veteran explorer, and to have been consulted and quoted as an authority in the practical details of colonization. The marvellous tales of his exploits which he told in his books furnished welcome materials for Ben Jonson and other playwrights; so

that he himself said, half in pride, half in complaint, "they have acted my fatal tragedies upon the stage and racked my relations at their pleasure."[1] Even then there were not wanting those who suspected the fidelity of his narratives, and who accused him of adorning his heroic anecdotes with exploits which he had wrought only in imagination. "Envy hath taxed me," he says, "to have writ too much and done too little."[2] Thomas Fuller, in his "Worthies of England,"[3] first published thirty-one years after Captain Smith's death, gives perhaps the cool afterthought of many of the Captain's contemporaries, in these contemptuous and delicately cutting words: "From the Turks in Europe he passed to the pagans in America, where . . . such his perils, preservations, dangers, deliverances, they seem to most men above belief, to some beyond truth. Yet have we two witnesses to attest them, the prose and the pictures, both in his own book; and it soundeth much to the diminution of his deeds, that he alone is the herald to publish and proclaim them." Probably it was this base incredulity of his contemporaries, this hard historical Sadduceeism, that Captain Smith and his immediate champions meant to designate by the words "envy," and "detraction," which meet us in their allusions to the reception then given to his writings. A namesake of the author, one N. Smith, thus bravely steps forward as his defender:

> "Sith thou, the man deserving of these ages,
> Much pain hast ta'en for this our kingdom's good,
> In climes unknown, 'mongst Turkës and salvages,
> T' enlarge our bounds, though with thy loss of blood,
> Hence damn'd Detraction—stand not in our way!
> Envy itself will not the truth gainsay."[4]

It is quite plain that while the weak spot in Captain Smith's character, his love of telling large stories, was sus-

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[1] "Epistle Dedicatory" in "True Travels." [2] Ibid.
[3] Edition of 1840, I. 275, 276. [4] Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." I. 246.

pected by many of his contemporaries, he nevertheless had among the best of them stanch and admiring friends. Sir Robert Cotton, the Earls of Pembroke, of Lindsay, and of Dover, the Duchess of Lenox, and Lord Hunsdon, were those in the upper spheres of society whom he could publicly name as his patrons and friends. Among the writers of commendatory verses prefixed and affixed to his books, are such eminent persons as Samuel Purchas, George Wither, and John Donne; and nearly all of these writers, whether now famous or obscure, apply to him terms of homage and endearment. Donne calls him "brave Smith;" Richard James calls him "dear noble Captain;" Ed. Jordan exclaims:

> "Good men will yield thee praise; then slight the rest;
> 'Tis best, praise-worthy, to have pleased the best;"[1]

while an anonymous writer, after reciting the names of the great explorers, Columbus, Cabot, Frobisher, Humphrey Gilbert, Drake, Gosnold, and others, says:

> "Though these be gone and left behind a name,
> Yet Smith is here to anvil out a piece
> To after ages and eternal fame,
> That we may have the golden Jason's fleece.
> He, Vulcan-like, did forge a true plantation,
> And chained their kings to his immortal glory,
> Restoring peace and plenty to the nation,
> Regaining honor to this worthy story."[2]

After all the abatements which a fair criticism must make from the praise of Captain John Smith either as a doer or as a narrator, his writings still make upon us the impression of a certain personal largeness in him, magnanimity, affluence, sense, and executive force. Over all his personal associates in American adventure he seems to tower, by the natural loftiness and reach of the perception with which he grasped the significance of their vast enter-

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[1] In Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." [2] Ibid. 61.

prise, and the means to its success. As a writer his merits are really great—clearness, force, vividness, picturesque and dramatic energy, a diction racy and crisp. He had the faults of an impulsive, irascible, egotistic, and imaginative nature; he sometimes bought human praise at too high a price; but he had great abilities in word and deed; his nature was upon the whole generous and noble; and during the first two decades of the seventeenth century he did more than any other Englishman to make an American nation and an American literature possible.

CHAPTER III.

VIRGINIA: OTHER EARLY WRITERS.

I.—George Percy of Northumberland—His worthiness—His graphic sketches of the brightness and gloom of their first year in America.

II.—William Strachey—His terrible voyage and wreck with Sir Thomas Gates—His book descriptive of it and of the state of the colony in Virginia—Some germs of Shakespeare's Tempest—Strachey's wonderful picture of a storm at sea.

III.—Alexander Whitaker, the devoted Christian missionary—His life and death and memory in Virginia—His appeal to England in "Good News from Virginia."

IV.—John Pory—His coming to Virginia—His previous career—A cosmopolite in a colony—His return to England—His amusing sketches of Indian character—The humors and consolations of pioneer life along the James River.

V.—George Sandys—His high personal qualities and his fine genius—His literary services before coming to America—Michael Drayton's exhortation to entice the Muses to Virginia—Sandys's fidelity to his literary vocation amid calamity and fatigue—His translation of Ovid—Its relation to poetry and scholarship in the new world—Passages from it—The story of Philomela—His poetic renown.

I.

In that little colony of earliest Americans, seated at Jamestown, and for more than twenty years struggling against almost every menace of destruction from without and within, were several other writers who have some claim to our notice. One of these was George Percy. Every slight glimpse we get of him through the chinks of contemporary reference tends to convince us that the uncommon respect in which he was held by his associates was rendered to him quite as much because he was a modest, brave, and honorable man, as because he was a brother

of the great Earl of Northumberland. He composed a "Discourse of the Plantations of the Southern Colony in Virginia by the English," of which, however, only a fragment is preserved—the fragment occupying six folio pages in Purchas's "Pilgrims." The portion of his book thus preserved relates the history of the colony from its departure out of England down to September, 1607; and is written in that style of idiomatic and nervous English prose which seems to have been the birthright of so many active Englishmen in the Elizabethan age. His descriptions of the beauty and fertility of Virginia as it appeared to the sea-sad eyes of the colonists in that happy month of their arrival, throw by contrast a deeper gloom upon the picture which he soon has to paint of the miseries besetting their first summer in Virginia—a summer which dragged over them slowly its horrible trail of homesickness, discord, starvation, pestilence, and Indian hostility. "Our men were destroyed with cruel diseases, as swellings, flixes, burning fevers, and by wars; and some departed suddenly. But for the most part they died of mere famine. There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were, in this new discovered Virginia. We watched every three nights lying on the bare cold ground, what weather soever came; warded all the next day which brought our men to be most feeble wretches. Our food was but a small can of barley sod in water to five men a day; our drink cold water taken out of the river, which was at a flood very salt, at a low tide full of slime and filth, which was the destruction of many of our men. Thus we lived for the space of five months in this miserable distress, not having five able men to man our bulwarks upon any occasion. If it had not pleased God to put a terror in the savages' hearts, we had all perished by those wild and cruel pagans, being in that weak estate as we were; our men night and day groaning in every corner of the fort most pitiful to hear. If there were any conscience in men, it would make their hearts to bleed to hear the

pitiful murmurings and outcries of our sick men, without relief every night and day for the space of six weeks; some departing out of the world, many times three or four in a night, in the morning their bodies trailed out of their cabins like dogs to be buried."[1]

II.

During the first decade of American literature a little book was written in Virginia, which, as is believed by some authors, soon rendered an illustrious service to English literature by suggesting to Shakespeare the idea of one of his noblest masterpieces, "The Tempest." It was in May of the year 1610 that sixty tattered and forlorn colonists—the last remnants of five hundred who were alive there six months before—crawled out from the block-house at Jamestown, and moved toward the river-bank to greet with a sickly welcome the unexpected arrival of Sir Thomas Gates. This brave commander with two small vessels and a hundred and fifty companions, had at last found his way into the James River after a voyage of almost incredible difficulty and peril. Just eleven months before, he had set sail from England for Virginia, with a fleet of nine ships and in charge of five hundred emigrants. On their passage, when they had been seven weeks at sea and were drawing near to the Virginia coast, they encountered a frightful tempest in which the fleet was scattered; and the admiral's ship, the Sea-Adventure, containing Sir Thomas

[1] Purchas, IV. 1690. Among the manuscripts of the English State Paper Office are three anonymous tracts relating to the same period as that covered by the American writings of Captain John Smith and of George Percy. These tracts were evidently written by one of their companions. They are the rough jottings of an inexpert diarist, and are too crude in expression to attract us on account of any literary merit. From copies made for George Bancroft, the American Antiquarian Society printed them in Vol. IV. of its Transactions. They were edited by Edward Everett Hale. They do contain one rather graphic and amusing passage, a description of the sturdy Indian Queen Apumatec.

Gates, Sir George Somers, and other distinguished and undistinguished company, was driven ashore upon one of the Bermudas. Not being heard from for many months, that ship with all on board was given up for lost. Indeed the ship itself was lost, battered to pieces upon the rocks; but out of its fragments the passengers constructed the two clumsy pinnaces in which, as just related, they at last completed their voyage to Jamestown. Among those who had borne a part in this ghastly and almost miraculous expedition was William Strachey, of whom but little is known except what is revealed in his own writings. He was a man of decided literary aptitude. Soon after his arrival here he was made secretary of Virginia, and, as he tells us, he "held it a service of duty . . . to be remembrancer of all accidents, occurrences, and undertakings"[1] connected with the colony during the time of his residence in it. Accordingly in July, 1610, when he had been in Virginia less than three months, he wrote at Jamestown and sent off to England "A True Reportory of the Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Kt., upon and from the islands of the Bermudas; his coming to Virginia; and the estate of that colony then and after under the government of the Lord La Ware."[2] Whoever reads this little book will be quite ready to believe that it may have brought suggestion and inspiration even to the genius of William Shakespeare. It is a book of marvellous power. Its account of Virginia is well done; but its most striking merit is its delineation of his dreadful sea-voyage, and particularly of the tempest which, after the terror and anguish of a thousand deaths, drove them upon the rocks of the Bermudas. Here his style becomes magnificent; it has some sentences which for imaginative and pathetic beauty, for vivid implications of appalling danger and dis-

[1] Preface to "Laws, Divine, Moral, and Martial," in Force, Hist. Tracts, III. 2.

[2] Reprinted in Purchas, IV. 1734–1758.

aster, can hardly be surpassed in the whole range of English prose. It was upon St. James's day, July the twenty-fourth, 1609, "the clouds gathering thick upon us, and the winds singing and whistling most unusually," that "a dreadful storm and hideous began to blow from out the north-east, which, swelling and roaring as it were by fits, some hours with more violence than others, at length did beat all light from heaven, which, like an hell of darkness, turned black upon us, so much the more fuller of horror as in such cases horror and fear use to overrun the troubled and overmastered senses of all. . . . For surely, . . . as death comes not so sudden nor apparent, so he comes not so elvish and painful to men . . . as at sea. . . . For four and twenty hours the storm, in a restless tumult, had blown so exceedingly as we could not apprehend in our imaginations any possibility of greater violence; yet did we still find it, not only more terrible but more constant, fury added to fury; and one storm, urging a second more outrageous than the former . . . sometimes strikes in our ship amongst women and passengers not used to such hurly and discomforts, made us look one upon the other with troubled hearts and panting bosoms, our clamors drowned in the winds, and the winds in thunder. Prayers might well be in the heart and lips, but drowned in the outcries of officers; nothing heard that could give comfort, nothing seen that might encourage hope. It is impossible for me, had I the voice of Stentor, and expression of as many tongues as his throat of voices, to express the outcries and miseries, not languishing, but wasting our spirits. . . . Our sails wound up lay without their use; . . . the sea swelled above the clouds and gave battle unto heaven. It could not be said to rain: the waters like whole rivers did flood in the air. And this I did still observe that, whereas upon the land, when a storm hath poured itself forth once in drifts of rain, the wind, as beaten down and vanquished therewith, not long after endureth; here the glut of water . . . was no

sooner a little emptied and qualified, but instantly the winds, as having gotten their mouths now free and at liberty, spake more loud, and grew more tumultuous and malignant. What shall I say? Winds and seas were as mad as fury and rage could make them. . . . There was not a moment in which the sudden splitting or instant oversetting of the ship was not expected. Howbeit, this was not all. It pleased God to bring a greater affliction upon us; for in the beginning of the storm we had received likewise a mighty leak; and the ship, in every joint almost having spewed out her oakum, . . . was grown five foot suddenly deep with water above her ballast, and we almost drowned within whilst we sat looking when to perish from above. This, imparting no less terror than danger, ran through the whole ship with much fright and amazement, startled and turned the blood, and took down the braves of the most hardy mariner of them all, insomuch as he that before happily felt not the sorrow of others, now began to sorrow for himself. . . . Once so huge a sea brake . . . upon us, as it covered our ship from stern to stem, like a garment or vast cloud; it filled her brimful . . . from the hatches up to the spar-deck. . . . During all this time the heavens looked so black upon us that it was not possible the elevation of the Pole might be observed; nor a star by night, nor sun-beam by day, was to be seen. Only upon the Thursday night, Sir George Somers being upon the watch, had an apparition of a little round light, like a faint star, trembling and streaming along with a sparkling blaze, half the height upon the main mast, and shooting sometimes from shroud to shroud, tempting to settle as it were upon any of the four shrouds; and for three or four hours together, or rather more, half the night, it kept with us, running sometimes along the main-yard to the very end and then returning. . . . But it did not light us any whit the more to our known way, who ran now, as do hoodwinked men, at all adventures. . . . East and by south we steered away

as much as we could to bear upright, . . . albeit we much unrigged our ship, threw overboard much luggage, many a trunk and chest, . . . and staved many a butt of beer, hogsheads of oil, cider, wine, and vinegar, and heaved away all our ordnance on the starboard side, and had now purposed to cut down the main mast. . . . For we were much spent, and our men so weary as their strengths together failed them with their hearts, having travailed now from Tuesday till Friday morning, day and night, without either sleep or food. . . . And it being now Friday, the fourth morning, it wanted little but that there had been a general determination to have shut up hatches, and, commending our sinful souls to God, committed the ship to the mercy of the sea. . . . But see the goodness and sweet introduction of better hope, by our merciful God given unto us. Sir George Somers, when no man had dreamed of such happiness, had discovered and cried land. Indeed the morning, now three quarters gone, had won a little clearness from the days before ; and it being better surveyed, the very trees were seen to move with the wind upon the shore-side. . . . By the mercy of God unto us, making out our boats, we had ere night brought all our men, women, and children . . . safe into the island. We found it to be the dangerous and dreaded island, or rather islands, of the Bermudas. . . . They be so terrible to all that ever touched on them, and such tempests, thunders, and other fearful objects are seen and heard about them, that they be called commonly the Devil's Islands, and are feared and avoided of all travellers alive, above any other place in the world ; . . . it being counted of most that they can be no habitation for men, but rather given over to devils and wicked spirits."

III.

At the very time when William Strachey, in some rude cabin near the banks of the James River, was writing his

most eloquent and thrilling book about Virginia and the awful voyage thither, there lived, in a comfortable parish in the north of England, a noble-minded clergyman, Alexander Whitaker, a man of apostolic zeal for the gospel, and of apostolic sorrow for all men who were still beyond the reach of the gospel; a man to whom his creed was so vivid and tremendous a fact that he stood ready to be a missionary for it, and a martyr, even at the world's end. His father was the celebrated divine, William Whitaker, master of Saint John's College, Cambridge; he himself had taken his degrees at that university; and he was happily settled, in full parochial composure, a man of property, usefulness, and good repute. But to him, such appeals from Virginia as those of William Strachey, came as a wailing cry of his own brethren for help,—all the more persuasive for the fascinating doom of danger and pain for Christ's sake, to which those appeals invited him. Accordingly in the following year, 1611, in the company of Sir Thomas Dale, this prosperous priest "did voluntarily leave his warm nest, and to the wonder of his kindred and amazement of them that knew him, undertook this . . . heroical resolution to go to Virginia, and help to bear the name of God unto the heathen."[1] Thenceforward, and for more than three years, even until his death by drowning sometime before the year 1617, Alexander Whitaker lived in Virginia a brave and blameless life, a true missionary for Christ,—the pure and beautiful light of his message going with him everywhere, across plantation and through wilderness, into the colonist's hut and the wigwam of the savage; and when at last he was seen no more of men, the tradition of him lingered there as a hallowing influence, and his name still lives in our early history under the tender and sacred title of "the Apostle of Virginia."[2] After he had been in America two years, and

[1] Wm. Crashawe, in "Epistle Dedicatory," prefixed to Whitaker's "Good News from Va." London, 1613.

[2] F. L. Hawks, "Eccl. Hist. Va." 29.

had made himself master of his subject, he put his experience, and his benign hopes, and his passionate sense of Christian duty, into a book which furnishes the next event to be mentioned in our literary annals, "Good News from Virginia," published in London, in 1613. The habits of the pulpit clung to him at his writing-table; and the book which he wrote for the enlightenment of England concerning Virginia, has the form and tone of a hortatory sermon; a "pithy and godly exhortation," as old Crashawe called it,[1] "interlaced with narratives of many particulars touching the country, climate, and commodities." He prefixes to it a biblical text; he expounds from that text the Christian doctrine of trying to do good to others even by a sacrifice of ourselves; and he points out the great opportunity which England has of illustrating this doctrine in the case of her forlorn colony in the new world,—a colony which he compares "to the growth of an infant which hath been afflicted from his birth with some grievous sickness, that many times no hope of life hath remained, and yet it liveth still."[2] In presenting to the mother-land the claims of Virginia upon her interest and pity, he gives a clear and well-wrought sketch of the country, the climate, and the Indians, expressing himself throughout the whole book in the diction of an earnest, simple-minded, scholarly man, although without any shining superiorities in thought or style. His own heart is full of grief for the Indians, to whose blighted and desolate natures he would bring the comfort of heavenly truth; and he sees not why other Christian Englishmen should not feel as he does: "Let the miserable condition of these naked slaves of the devil move you to compassion toward them. They acknowledge that there is a great God, but know him not; . . . wherefore they serve the devil for fear, after a most base manner. . . . They live naked in body, as if the shame of their sin deserved no covering. . . . They esteem it

[1] In "Epistle Dedicatory." [2] "Good News from Va." 22.

a virtue to lie, deceive, and steal, as their master teacheth them. . . . If this be their life, what think you shall become of them after death, but to be partakers with the devil and his angels in hell for evermore?"[1] Having in this book tried to induce England to bring only her noblest moods to her consideration of the affairs of Virginia, having appealed to piety, compassion, magnanimity, even the love of gain, at last, like a true-born Englishman, from the wilderness of America where his English heart still beat within him, he stretched his hand homeward and touched the chord of national pride: "Shall our nation, hitherto famous for noble attempts, and the honorable finishing of what they have undertaken, be now taxed for inconstancy? . . . Yea, shall we be a scorn among our neighbor princes, for basely leaving what we honorably began? . . . Awake, you true-hearted Englishmen: . . . remember that the plantation is God's, and the reward your country's."[2]

IV.

On the nineteenth of April, 1619, there arrived at Jamestown a ship from England having on board a new governor for Virginia, Sir George Yeardley, and in his train as secretary for the colony a man of considerable distinction at that time in Europe, Master John Pory. This man was then about forty-nine years of age. He had received his education at Cambridge, and had started out in life with bright tokens of coming usefulness and renown. He had many accomplishments; he was, besides, a wit and a boon companion; his style of writing was facile and sparkling; and he had the gift of making friends in high places, who conceived great hopes of him and were glad to help him to realize them. He became a member of Parliament; for several years he was much employed abroad in the diplomatic service of his country; but before middle life

[1] "Good News from Va." 23, 24. [2] Ibid. 33.

there had become manifest in him certain traits of moral infirmity which, while they did not end his career, cast a shadow across it and dwarfed it in efficiency and honor. Evidently, his convivial habits came to predominate over his resolution for work; he developed a restlessness of temper, an uneasy curiosity, a fickle will, a scorn of plodding tasks, which turned him into a sort of genteel vagabond, sent him wandering over Europe and the East, and threw him into rather frequent familiarity with the pawnbroker and the sponging-house. More unfortunate than all, as was gently said of him by one of his acquaintances, he "followed the custom of strong potations." He never altogether lost his hold upon his influential friends; and doubtless it was in the hope of giving him a fresh start in life that they procured for him the fine appointment of secretary of Virginia and sent him over with Sir George Yeardley to work out a better career for himself in the new world. His attractive manners, his vivacity of speech, his various learning, his great political experience, his manifold knowledge of the world, rendered him an important personage in the new settlements along the James River. He was at once added to the colonial council; and on the meeting of the general assembly he was given the speakership—an office which his brisk talent and his parliamentary experience enabled him to fill with unusual acceptance. But he ceased from all his offices in 1621, and in 1622 he left the colony for England, on his way dropping in upon the staid young community of Pilgrims at Plymouth and paying them a visit which proved to be mutually agreeable. During his residence in Virginia he had made three excursions among the Indians, of which he has left a very lively account,[1] spicing it with anecdotes that reveal the author's alertness for the grotesque and amusing aspects of the savage character. For example, he introduces us to a certain Namenacus, the king of

[1] Published in Capt. J. Smith's "Gen. Hist." II. 61–64.

Pawtuxent, a crafty, complimentary, and murderous potentate, who, hoping to have the pleasure of assassinating Pory and his companions, very characteristically began his acquaintance with them by dramatic assurances of his guileless friendship. "He led us into a thicket where, all sitting down, he showed us his naked breast, asking if we saw any deformity upon it. We told him, 'No.' 'No more,' said he, 'is the inside, but as sincere and pure. Therefore come freely to my country and welcome.'" Upon a subsequent interview, the king "much wondered at our Bible, but much more to hear it was the law of our God; and the first chapter of Genesis, expounded of Adam and Eve, and simple marriage. To which he replied, 'He was like Adam in one thing, for he never had but one wife at once.'"

The most sprightly specimen of Pory's writings is a letter which he sent from Virginia to the celebrated English diplomatist and statesman, Sir Dudley Carleton, and which may be accepted likewise as a pleasant example of the best epistolary style of the period—colloquial, gossiping, playful, just a little stiff here and there with the embroidery of seventeenth century formalism; deeply interesting also for its life-like sketches of the wilderness, the Indians, and the daily life of the infant colony.[1] He is in raptures over the fertility of the country. "Vines here are in such abundance, as wheresoever a man treads they are ready to embrace his foot. I have tasted here of a great black grape as big as a Damascene, that hath a true Muscatel taste; the vine whereof, now spending itself to the tops of high trees, if it were reduced into a vineyard and there domesticated, would yield incomparable fruit." Animals brought from Europe, he discovers, do not degenerate in America. "For cattle, they do mightily increase here, both kine, hogs, and goats, and are much greater in stature than the race of them first brought out of England." But

[1] This letter is printed in 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. IX. 4–30.

Pory had the eye of a humorist, and he amused himself in watching the germs of a jubilant and lusty social display in this raw community of pioneers: "Now that your lordship may know that we are not the veriest beggars in the world, our cow-keeper here of James City on Sundays goes accoutred all in fresh flaming silk; and a wife of one that in England had professed the black art, not of a scholar, but of a collier of Croydon, wears her rough beaver hat, with a fair pearl hat-band and a silken suit thereto correspondent." And it is pleasant to hear him tell how he contrived to adapt himself to such a life and to get rid of his time in a dull place like this: "At my first coming hither, the solitary uncouthness of this place, compared with those parts of Christendom or Turkey where I had been, and likewise my being sequestered from all occurrents and passages which are so rife there, did not a little vex me. And yet in these five months of my continuance here, there have come at one time or another eleven sail of ships into this river; but freighted more with ignorance than with any other merchandise. At length being hardened to this custom of abstinence from curiosity, I am resolved wholly to mind my business here, and next after my pen to have some good book always in store, being in solitude the best and choicest company. Besides among these crystal rivers and odoriferous woods I do escape much expense, envy, contempt, vanity, and vexation of mind."

V.

We now come to the last one of this group of early writers—Argonauts of the first two decades of Virginia—who, achieving more than they knew, laid in America the foundations of the new English literature. The writer whom we are about to study, George Sandys, was perhaps the only one of all his fellow-craftsmen here who was a professed man of letters. Like William Strachey and John Pory before him, he held an official appointment in

the colony, where he arrived in the autumn of 1621, in the company of Sir Francis Wyat, who at that time began his administration as governor. In personal character George Sandys was a man very different from his literary predecessor, the jocular and bibulous Bohemian, John Pory. His social connections in England were high; his father being the celebrated Edwin Sandys, archbishop of York; and an elder brother being the noble-natured politician Sir Edwin Sandys, who was the friend of Richard Hooker, and was so dreaded by James the First that the latter once objected to his election as treasurer of the Virginia Company in these vigorous words:—"Choose the devil if you will, but not Sir Edwin Sandys." At the time of his arrival in America George Sandys was forty-four years old, and was then well known as a traveller in Eastern lands, as a scholar, as an admirable prose-writer, but especially as a poet. His claim to the title of poet then rested chiefly on his fine metrical translation of the first five books of Ovid's Metamorphoses, the second edition of which came from the press in that very year 1621 in which the poet sailed away to America in the retinue of Sir Francis Wyat. This fragment was a specimen of literary workmanship in many ways creditable. The rendering of the original is faithful; and though in some places the version labors under the burden of Latin idioms and of unmusical proper names, it often rises into freedom and velocity of movement, and into genuine sweetness, ease, and power. 'How great a pity,' perhaps some of his readers thought in 1621, 'that a man of such gifts and accomplishments should banish himself to the savagery of the Virginia wilderness, when by staying at home he might give us, in a version so pure and masterful, the remaining ten books of the Metamorphoses.' But there was one great poet then in England, Michael Drayton, who did not take so melancholy a view of the departure of George Sandys for Virginia. He, too, wished the translation of Ovid completed by that same deft and scholarly hand; but he saw no rea-

son why the lamp of letters should not burn on the banks of the James River, as well as on those of the Thames. Therefore he addressed to his dear friend a poetic epistle in which he exhorts him to keep up his literary occupations, even in the rough desert to which he has gone:

> "And, worthy George, by industry and use,
> Let's see what lines Virginia will produce.
> Go on with Ovid, as you have begun
> With the first five books; let your numbers run
> Glib as the former; so shall it live long
> And do much honor to the English tongue.
> Entice the Muses thither to repair;
> Entreat them gently; train them to that air;
> For they from hence may thither hap to fly."[1]

These exhortations were not wasted on the gentle poet. His vocation to the high service of letters was too distinct to be set aside even by the privations of pioneer life in Virginia and by the oppressive tasks of his official position there. And yet those privations and those tasks proved to be greater, as it chanced, than any human eye had foreseen; for, only a few months after his arrival, namely in March, 1622, came that frightful Indian massacre of the white settlers along the James River, which nearly annihilated the colony; which drove in panic into Jamestown the survivors from the outlying settlements; which turned the peaceful plantation, just beginning to be prosperous, into an overcrowded camp of half-fed but frenzied hunters, hunting only for red men with rifle and bloodhound, and henceforward for several years living only to exterminate them from the earth. It was under these circumstances—the chief village thronged with panic-struck and helpless people; all industry stopped; suspicions, fears, complaints, filling the air; his high official position entailing upon him special cares and responsibilities; without many books, without a lettered atmosphere or the cheer of lettered

[1] Drayton, Works, Anderson's ed. 542.

men—that the poet was to pursue his great task, if he was to pursue it at all. It is not much to say that ordinary men would have surrendered to circumstances such as these. George Sandys did not surrender to them; and that he was able, during the next few years, robbing sleep of its rights, to complete his noble translation of the fifteen books of Ovid's Metamorphoses, is worthy of being chronicled among the heroisms of authorship. It is probable that Sandys returned to England in 1625; at any rate, in the year 1626 he brought out in London, in a folio volume, the first edition of his finished work; and in his dedication of it to King Charles, he made a touching reference to the disasters in Virginia from which he had only just escaped, and to the great difficulties he had overcome in the composition of the book that he thus laid at his sovereign's feet. He speaks of his translation as "this . . . piece limned by that unperfect light which was snatched from the hours of night and repose. For the day was not mine, but dedicated to the service of your great father and yourself; which, had it proved as fortunate as faithful in me, and others more worthy, we had hoped, ere many years had turned about, to have presented you with a rich and well peopled kingdom; from whence now, with myself, I only bring this composure:

Inter victrices hederam tibi serpere laurus.

It needeth more than a single denization, being a double stranger; sprung from the stock of the ancient Romans, but bred in the new world, of the rudeness whereof it cannot but participate, especially having wars and tumults to bring it to light instead of the Muses."

This production, handed down to us in stately form through two centuries and a half, is the very first expression of elaborate poetry, it is the first utterance of the conscious literary spirit, articulated in America. The writings which precede this book in our literary history—the writings of Captain John Smith, of Percy, of Strachey, of

Whitaker, of Pory—were all produced for some immediate practical purpose, and not with any avowed literary intentions. This book may well have for us a sort of sacredness, as being the first monument of English poetry, of classical scholarship, and of deliberate literary art, reared on these shores. And when we open the book, and examine it with reference to its merits, first, as a faithful rendering of the Latin text, and second, as a specimen of fluent, idiomatic, and musical English poetry, we find that in both particulars it is a work that we may be proud to claim as in some sense our own, and to honor as the morning-star at once of poetry and of scholarship in the new world. For an illustration of the vigor and melody of his verse, we may select a brief passage from the sixth book, relating the woful story of Philomela. King Tereus has perpetrated an ineffable crime of cruelty and lust upon Philomela, who is the sister of his wife Procne; and the latter, having at last discovered the horrid fact, passes into a rage against her husband which stimulates all her faculties to the invention of some form of revenge that may be worthy, in its exquisite torment and in its annihilating doom, of the monster whom she intends to punish:

——"her bosom hardly bears
So vast a rage."

Her innocent sister, the terror-smitten and passive victim of the appalling crime, she sees weeping, and gently chides her for so doing:

"No tears, said she, our lost condition needs,
But steel; or, if thou hast what steel exceeds,
I for all horrid practices am fit—
To wrap this roof in flame, and him in it;
His eyes, his tongue, . . .
T' extirp; or, with a thousand wounds divorce
His guilty soul. The deed I intend is great,
But what, as yet I know not."

In the terrible calm of her white wrath, while she is thus

waiting for some device of perfect retribution with which to overwhelm her husband, suddenly enters her own beloved son Itys. But Itys is his son, likewise; the one object in all the world most dear to him. In the instant there flames through her soul the most fierce and hideous inspiration that ever possessed a mother's mind: by a bloody sacrifice of that son she can thrust the knife of anguish deepest into the heart of her husband. The whole plan evolves itself before her in a flash; and even the warmth of her own love for her darling child is frozen well-nigh dead in comparison with the intolerable heat of her purpose of vengeance. And yet

> "when her son saluted her, and clung
> Unto her neck; mixed kisses, as he hung,
> With childish blandishments; her high-wrought blood
> Began to calm, and rage distracted stood:
> Tears trickled from her eyes by strong constraint."

But, in a moment, the sight of her sister once more, standing in the woe of her speechless shame and pain, recalls her to her unpitying purpose, and she breaks out into a renewed cry of vengeance against her husband through the sacrifice of their son. Him she now clutches with a maniacal fury,

> "as when by Ganges' floods
> A tigress drags a fawn through silent woods.
> Retiring to the most sequestered room,
> While he, with hands upheaved, foresees his doom,
> Clings to her bosom; mother! mother! cried;
> She stabs him, nor once turned her face aside.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> His yet quick limbs, ere all his soul could pass,
> She piecemeal tears. Some boil in hollow brass,
> Some hiss on spits. The pavements blushed with blood.
> Procne invites her husband to this food,
> And feigns her country's rite, which would afford
> No servant, nor companion, but her lord."

The king unwittingly accepts her invitation; he comes to the feast; and seated on his grandsire's throne, devours, unknowingly, the tender flesh of his own son. Then, when exhilarated by the feast, he

> "bids her—so soul-blinded!—call his boy.
> Procne could not disguise her cruel joy.
> In full fruition of her horrid ire,
> Thou hast, said she, within thee thy desire.
> He looks about, asks where; and while again
> He asks and calls, all bloody with the slain,
> Forth like a Fury, Philomela flew
> And at his face the head of Itys threw;
> Nor ever more than now desired a tongue
> To express the joy of her revengëd wrong.
> He with loud outcries doth the board repel,
> And calls the Furies from the depths of hell;
> Now tears his breast, and strives from thence in vain
> To pull the abhorrëd food; now weeps amain,
> And calls himself his son's unhappy tomb;
> Then draws his sword, and through the guilty room
> Pursues the sisters, who appear with wings
> To cut the air; and so they did. One[1] sings
> In woods; the other[2] near the house remains,
> And on her breast yet bears her murder's stains.
> He, swift with grief and fury, in that space
> His person changed. Long tufts of feathers grace
> His shining crown; his sword a bill became;
> His face all armed; whom we a lapwing name."[3]

Immediately upon its publication the work attained in England a great celebrity, and during the seventeenth century passed through at least eight editions. The author lived on to a good old age, devoting himself not only to original poetry but to the translation of the Psalms and of other poetical books of the Bible; and at last died, beloved and honored, at Bexley Abbey, in Kent, in 1644. His fame did not pass away with his earthly life. Eigh-

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[1] Philomela, the nightingale. [2] Procne, the swallow.
[3] Sandys's Ovid, 214, 215.

teen years afterward Thomas Fuller, in terms of affectionate praise, enrolled him among the worthies of England: "He most elegantly translated Ovid's Metamorphoses into English verse; so that as the soul of Aristotle was said to have transmigrated into Thomas Aquinas, . . . Ovid's genius may seem to have passed into Master Sandys." He "was altogether as dexterous at inventing as translating; and his own poems as sprightful, vigorous, and masculine."[1] John Dryden spoke of Sandys as "the best versifier of the former age,"[2] and is said to have declared that had Sandys finished the translation of Virgil which he had begun, he himself would not have attempted it after him. Pope, whose critical ear for verse was most exacting, and whose praise was never easily won, said that he "liked extremely"[3] Sandys's translation of Ovid.

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[1] Thomas Fuller, "Worthies of Eng." ed. 1840, III. 434.

[2] Works of Dryden, ed. 1779, XV. 14.

[3] Spence, "Anecdotes," ed. 1820, 276.

CHAPTER IV.

VIRGINIA: ITS LITERATURE DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE FIRST PERIOD.

I.—The establishment of Maryland upon the territory of Virginia—Maryland's slight literary record for this period blended with that of Virginia—Father Andrew White and his Latin narrative—John Hammond, the Anglo-American, studying the social problems of England—His solution of them in the word America—His book, "Leah and Rachel," and its original American flavor.

II.—George Alsop—His life in Maryland—His droll book about Maryland—Comic descriptions of the effects of his voyage—Vivid accounts of the country, of its productions.

III.—Sketch of Bacon's rebellion in 1676—The heroic and capable qualities of Bacon—The anonymous manuscripts relating to the rebellion—Literary indications furnished by these writings—Descriptions of a beleaguered Indian fort—Of Bacon's conflicts with Berkeley—Of Bacon's military stratagem—Bacon's death—Noble poem upon his death.

IV.—Review of the literary record of Virginia during this period—Its comparative barrenness—Explanation found in the personal traits of the founders of Virginia—And in their peculiar social organization—Resulting in inferior public prosperity—Especially in lack of schools and of intellectual stimulus—Sir William Berkeley's baneful influence—Printing prohibited in Virginia by the English government—Religious freedom prohibited by the people of Virginia—Literary development impossible under such conditions.

THE brilliant fact in the first period of the literary history of Virginia, contributed to it by the services of George Sandys, may awaken within us the expectation of finding there, as we pass onward in our researches, other facts of the same kind. But we shall scarcely find them. During the remaining years of the period that we are now studying, the intellectual life of the great colony found vent, if at all, chiefly in some other way than that of literature.

I.

It was but a few years after the departure of George Sandys from Virginia that the Roman Catholic nobleman, Lord Baltimore, a favorite of King Charles, paying a visit to Virginia, and being fascinated by the loveliness and the opulence of nature there, obtained for his intended colony that choice portion of Virginia which lies north of the Potomac, and which Virginia parted with only after a jealous and reluctant pang that did not cease to ache for many a year afterward. Had the colony of Maryland, for the period now under view, any story of literary achievement for us to tell, it would be fitting to tell it in this place, in immediate connection with the early literary history of Virginia. The most of what was written during those years on either side of the Potomac, was in the form of angry pamphlets relating to their local feuds,[1] or of homely histories of pioneer experience,[2] or of mere letters about business,—all being too crude and elemental to be of any interest to us in our present studies. The Jesuit priest, Father Andrew White, an accomplished man and a devout servant of his order, wrote in Latin an elegant account[3] of the voyage of the first colonists to Maryland, and of "the manifold advantages and riches" of the new land to which he dedicated his life, and in which he hoped would "be sown not so much the seeds of grain and fruit trees as of religion and piety."[4]

In exploring this raw and savage time, we encounter one man, John Hammond, who became, in a small way,

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[1] See documents in "Virginia and Maryland," Force, Hist. Tracts, II. No. 12.

[2] As Henry Fleet's "Journal," in Neill's "Founders of Md." 19–37; or, "A Relation of Md.," in Sabin's Reprints, No. 2.

[3] "Relatio Itineris in Marylandum;" discovered in Rome in 1832; translated into Eng. and printed in Force, Hist. Tracts, IV. No. 12. Better ed. in Maryland Hist. Soc. Collections, 1874.

[4] White's "Relation," 4.

an author in spite of himself, an Englishman transformed by his long residence here into a stanch and emphatic American, and belonging equally to Virginia and to Maryland. To the former colony he came in 1635; after living there nineteen years he removed to Maryland, whence at the end of two years, namely, in 1656, he went temporarily to England. Though back in the old home, he was at once homesick for the new one: "It is not long since I came from thence, . . . nor do I intend, by God's assistance, to be long out of it again;"[1] "it is that country in which I desire to spend the remnant of my days, in which I covet to make my grave."[2] As he went about England, two things greatly grieved him: one was, that he found England full of poor people, who were borne down in the press and rush for existence there, ragged, half-fed, crushed mortals, without any hope of ever rising out of their misery so long as they stayed in the old world; the second thing was, that while the most of these hapless people might escape from such troubles by going to the new world—where were room and chance enough for all—they were frightened from the attempt by certain wild and rank calumnies against America which then pervaded England. It seemed, therefore, to be his duty as an American abroad to sit down immediately and write a little book, giving the testimony of his own experience in America for "upward of one and twenty years," and by the truth putting to flight those clouds of lies that had "blinded and kept off many from going thither whose miseries and misfortunes by staying in England are much to be lamented, and much to be pitied."[3]

Thus was produced in London, and published there, in 1656, an extremely vigorous and sprightly tract, which the author quaintly named "Leah and Rachel,"[4] these words representing "the two fruitful sisters, Virginia and Mary-

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[1] "Leah and Rachel," 7. [2] Ibid. 26, 27.
[3] Ibid. 7. [4] Printed in Force, Hist. Tracts, No. 14.

land." Evidently John Hammond had but little practice in the use of a pen; even to himself his sentences looked "so harsh and disordered" that he was rather sorry to fix his name to them. But he was a man of strong sense; he was very much in earnest; and he spoke his mind in a language so manly, frank, and vital, that even its uncouthness cannot take away the interest with which we stop and listen to him. The charges made against Virginia and Maryland, he bluntly repeats, not softening them: "The country is reported to be an unhealthy place; a nest of rogues, . . . dissolute and rooking persons." As regards Virginia, he admits that "at the first settling and many years after, it deserved those aspersions; nor were they then aspersions, but truths." For then in England "were jails emptied, youth seduced, and infamous women drilled in" and sent to Virginia; where were "no civil courts of justice but under a martial law, no redress of grievances; complaints were repaid with stripes, moneys with scoffs, tortures made delights, and in a word all and the worst that tyranny could inflict. . . . Yet was not Virginia all this while without divers honest and virtuous inhabitants," who at last rallied, put down their white barbarians, and brought about the beginning of a better state, causing good laws to be made, encouraging industry, and even sending to England for preachers. Unfortunately not many of the preachers who came in response to this appeal were of the kind to benefit the Virginians or any one else; for "very few of good conversation would adventure thither; . . . yet many came, such as wore black coats, and could babble in a pulpit, roar in a tavern, exact from their parishioners, and rather by their dissoluteness destroy than feed their flocks."[1] But in spite of all disadvantages, Virginia had done much to redeem itself; had "become a place of pleasure and plenty," and "a model on which industry may as much improve itself as in any

[1] "Leah and Rachel," 7–9.

habitable part of the world;" and both Virginia and Maryland offered an almost boundless opportunity to those who in England had no opportunity at all. This was the burden of his valiant and hearty speech. He could not get over his astonishment at "the dull stupidity of people necessitated in England, who . . . live here a base, slavish, penurious life; . . . choosing rather than they will forsake England to stuff Newgate, Bridewell, and other jails with their carcasses, nay, cleave to Tyburn itself. . . . Others itch out their wearisome lives in reliance of other men's charities, an uncertain and unmanly expectation. Some, more abhorring such courses, betake themselves to almost perpetual and restless toil and drudgeries, out of which . . . they make hard shift to subsist from hand to mouth, until age or sickness takes them off from labor, and directs them the way to beggary."[1] One can almost see now the droll mixture of pity and impatience with which this clear-headed and forceful American, fresh from the ample elbow-room and the easy subsistence of his own country, must have stalked about the streets of London and stared at the paltry and painful devices that poor men and women had to resort to there for keeping soul and body together. How grim is the unintended satire of this picture! "I have seriously considered when I have (passing the streets) heard the several cries, and noting the commodities and the worth of them they have carried and cried up and down, how possibly a livelihood could be exacted out of them, as to cry 'matches,' 'small-coal,' 'blacking,' 'pen and ink,' 'thread laces,' and a hundred more such kind of trifling merchandises. Then looking on the nastiness of their linen habits and bodies, I conclude if gain sufficient could be raised out of them for subsistence, yet their manner of living was degenerate and base, and their condition . . . far below the meanest servant in Virginia."[2] One day this determined student

[1] "Leah and Rachel," 17, 18. [2] Ibid. 18.

of social science got his eye fastened upon an individual specimen of wretchedness in the London streets, a poor fagot-pedler, whom our author thereupon followed up and investigated thoroughly hour by hour. "I saw a man heavily loaden with a burden of fagots on his back, crying, 'dry fagots,' 'dry fagots.' He travelled much ground, bawled frequently, and sweat with his burden; but I saw none buy. Near three hours I followed him, in which time he rested. I entered into discourse with him; offered him drink, which he thankfully accepted of. . . . I inquired what he got by each burden when sold: he answered me, 'three pence.' I further asked him what he usually got a day: he replied, 'some days nothing, some days sixpence; sometimes more, but seldom.' Methought it was a pitiful life, and I admired how he could live on it!"[1] Therefore he would speak out the truth about Virginia and Maryland, and thus "stop those black-mouthed babblers," who, abusing "God's great blessing in adding to England so flourishing a branch," wickedly persuaded "many souls rather to follow desperate and miserable courses in England than to engage in so honorable an undertaking as to travel . . . there."[2]

This, indeed, is genuine American talk. Here, certainly, in these brusque sentences, do we find a literature smacking of American soil and smelling of American air. Here, thus early in our studies, do we catch in American writings that new note of hope and of help for humanity in distress, and of a rugged personal independence, which, almost from the hour of our first settlements in this land, America began to send back, with unveiled exultation, to Europe. Henceforward, for myriads of men and women in the ancient nations, to whom life had always been a hard battle and a losing one, this single word America blossomed into a whole vocabulary of words, all testifying plainly to them of a better time coming, of a reasonable

[1] "Leah and Rachel," 18. [2] Ibid. 20.

chance, somewhere, even in this world, of getting a fresh start in life, and of winning the victory over poverty, nastiness, and fear; nourishing within them a manly might and pride, a resolute discontent with failure, a rightful ambition to get on in the race, a healthy disdain of doing in this life anything less than one's best. For the first time, perhaps, in the long experience of mankind on this planet, was then proclaimed this strong and jocund creed; and it was proclaimed first, as it has been since proclaimed continually, in American literature. Of that literature it still constitutes a most original, racy, and characteristic trait.

II.

Whatsoever distinction may be derived from the little book that has been just spoken of, Maryland and Virginia may divide it between them. We have now to mention a book the distinction of which belongs to Maryland alone. In 1666, just ten years after John Hammond's fearless and dashing brochure started out to tilt with English misapprehensions of America, there appeared in London another brochure on a somewhat similar errand,—an errand explained in the work itself in some lines addressed to the author:

> "Thou held'st it noble to maintain the truth
> 'Gainst all the rabble-rout that yelping stand
> To cast aspersions on thy Maryland."[1]

This book, altogether a jovial, vivacious, and most amusing production, was entitled "A Character of the Province of Maryland."[2] Of its author, George Alsop, little is known. He was born in 1638; and he had served in London a two years' apprenticeship to something—probably to the profession of solicitor—when, in 1658, being just twenty years old, and breathing out threatenings and

[1] "H. W." to his friend George Alsop.

[2] New ed. by John Gilmary Shea, N. Y. 1869.

slaughter against Oliver Cromwell, he embarked for Maryland, so poor that he bound himself, as is supposed, to repay the price of his transportation by laboring as a servant for four years after his arrival in the colony. He had the good fortune to fall into the hands of a generous master; and with his unique gift of cheerfulness he even found in his four years of servitude "a commanding and undeniable enjoyment."[1] The restoration of King Charles brought a perfect tempest of pleasure to this original Mark Tapley; and he celebrated in verse the satisfaction with which, in his distant abiding-place, he reflected on

> "Noll's old brazen head,
> Which on the top of Westminster's high lead
> Stands on a pole, erected to the sky,
> As a grand trophy to his memory."[2]

As soon as he could do so, he seems to have gone back to England. Whether he remained there, or returned to Maryland, is not known. At any rate, for Maryland he cherished only kind recollections; he was willing, probably for a consideration, to be her literary champion; and in the year already named, he huddled together and printed that medley of frolicsome papers, which appear to have been written mostly in Maryland, and which set forth from various droll points of view a description of that province. There was but one other American book[3] produced in the seventeenth century that for mirthful, grotesque, and slashing energy, can compare with this. Alsop's book is written both in prose and in verse, and is a heterogeneous mixture of fact and fiction, of description and speculation, of wild fun and wild nonsense. "If I have . . . composed anything," says this literary merry-andrew, in his dedication of the book to Lord Baltimore, "that's wild and confused, it is because I am so myself;

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[1] Dedication. [2] "A Character of the Province of Md." 102, 103.
[3] "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam."

and the world, as far as I can perceive, is not much out of the same trim." Then turning to "the merchant adventurers for Maryland," he tells them pertly: "This dish of discourse was intended for you at first, but it was manners to let my Lord have the first cut, the pie being his." From the beginning to the end of his book, nearly everything is jocular, much of it coarse, some of it indelicate and even obscene. His good humor is of the loud-laughing kind. He is a scaramouch with pen in hand, and he pokes fun at himself as at everybody else. "I have ventured to come abroad in print, and if I should be laughed at for my good meaning, it would so break the credit of my understanding that I should never dare to show my face upon the Exchange of conceited wits again."[1] His own praises, likewise, he sounds in lusty fashion; yet he hopes that no one will think this unjustifiable: "For I dwell so far from my neighbors, that if I do not praise myself, nobody else will."[2] After the frequent manner of authors in those days, he has, besides prefatory addresses to patrons, readers, and friends in general, a prefatory address to the book itself:

> "Farewell, poor brat! thou in a monstrous world,
> In swaddling clothes, thus up and down art hurled;
> There to receive what destiny doth contrive,
> Either to perish or be saved alive.
> Good Fate protect thee from a critic's power;
> . . . . . .
> For if they once but wring and screw their mouth,
> Cock up their hats, and set the point due-south,
> Arms all akimbo, and with belly strut
> As if they had Parnassus in their gut,
> These are the symptoms of the murthering fall
> Of my poor infant, and his burial."[3]

His direct account of Maryland he presents in four parts: first, the country; second, its inhabitants; third,

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[1] Address to the Merchant Adventurers. [2] Preface.
[3] "A Character of the Province of Md." 28.

the arrangements for carrying poor people thither; fourth, traffic and agriculture. He then gives a description of "the wild and naked Indians of Maryland, their customs, manners, absurdities, and religion." Finally, he inserts some of the letters—piquant and ridiculous they are—which he wrote while in Maryland to his friends at home.

Even his rough voyage over the sea, and the disagreeable effects of it upon himself, he cannot speak of seriously. "We had a blowing and dangerous passage of it," he says; "and for some days after I arrived I was an absolute Copernicus, it being one point of my moral creed to believe the world had a pair of long legs, and walked with the burthen of creation upon her back. For, to tell you the very truth of it, for some days upon land, after so long and tossing a passage, I was so giddy that I could hardly tread an even step; so that all things, both above and below, . . . appeared to me like the Kentish Britons to William the Conqueror—in a moving posture."[1] Undertaking to give some idea of the topography of the province, he accomplishes it, but under a rather bold anatomical image: "Maryland is a province situated upon the large extending bowels of America;"[2] and the country itself is "pleasant in respect of the multitude of navigable rivers and creeks that conveniently and most profitably lodge within the arms of her green-spreading and delightful woods."[3] He is captivated by the beauty of this magnificent and merry new world: "He who out of curiosity desires to see the landskip of the creation drawn to the life, or to read nature's universal herbal without book, may, with the optics of a discreet discerning, view Maryland dressed in her green and fragrant mantle of the Spring,"[4] where the trees, plants, and flowers "by their dumb vegetable oratory each hour speak to the inhabitants in silent acts, that they need not look for any other terrestrial paradise to

[1] "A Character of the Province of Md." 93.
[2] Ibid. 35.
[3] Ibid. 35.
[4] Ibid. 36.

suspend or tire their curiosity upon while she is extant."[1] He is delighted also at the multitude and the physical thrift of the animals wandering in these illimitable forests; and he expresses his peculiar enthusiasm in his own comic and obstreperous style: "Herds of deer are as numerous in this province of Maryland as cuckolds can be in London, only their horns are not so well dressed and tipped with silver;"[2] "the park they traverse their ranging and unmeasured walks in, is bounded and impanelled in with no other pales than the rough and billowed ocean."[3] "Here, if the devil had such a vagary in his head as he had once among the Gadarenes, he might drown a thousand head of hogs, and they'd ne'er be missed; for the very woods of this province swarm with them."[4]

III.

In the year 1676 there occurred in Virginia an outburst of popular excitement which, for a hundred and fifty years afterward, was grotesquely misrepresented by the historians, and which only within recent years has begun to work itself clear of the traditional perversion. This excitement is still indicated by the sinister name that was at first applied to it, Bacon's rebellion. With this remarkable event the literary history of Virginia now becomes curiously involved; and it is necessary to our purposes that we should give here at least an outline of it.

Upon the restoration of Charles the Second in 1660, the Old Dominion of Virginia, which is accurately described by its latest historian as having been "the most Anglican . . . and most loyal of the colonies,"[5] was treated with characteristic ingratitude by the Stuart king, whose accession to power, it was wittily said, signified indemnity to his enemies and oblivion to his friends.

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[1] "A Character of the Province of Md." 37.
[2] Ibid. 94.
[3] Ibid. 39.
[4] Ibid. 94.
[5] C. Campbell, "Hist. Va." 282.

There was long a tradition in this country that at his coronation the restored monarch wore a robe of silk sent to him by his cavalier subjects in Virginia. "But this," bitterly remarks the old Virginia historian, Beverley,[1] "was all the reward the country had for their loyalty." Even this reward, however, the country did not have; for the agreeable tradition relating to the coronation-robe has now been exploded.[2] The first parliament under King Charles passed a series of navigation acts so selfish and so pitiless as nearly to annihilate every agricultural and commercial interest of Virginia, to lead to a general paralysis of industry there, and to excite a universal discontent and alarm. Moreover, in disregard of all valid land-titles and of all valuable improvements upon the lands, the king kept giving away to his favorites large tracts of the most populous territory in Virginia, ignoring the real owners of the soil, or transferring them with it, as if they had been but herds of cattle or gangs of serfs. These acts of parliamentary and regal injustice, continued recklessly from 1660 to 1676, were enough to destroy all public and private prosperity in Virginia, and to give to them, instead of their old loyal serenity and submissiveness, hearts burning with exasperation or sullen with a sort of lawless despair. But even this was not all. Just on the tangled western verge of the narrow territory occupied by the white settlements in Virginia, began the wilderness—the still immense and impenetrable lair of the red men. Twice before in the life of the colony, first in 1622 and again in 1639, Virginia had tasted the horrors of an Indian massacre. And now once more, in the spring of 1676, at the very moment when the minds of men were torn by anxieties at the lawless interference of the king and parliament with their most valuable rights, and were in anguish over the next possible development in this tragedy of despotism from beyond the ocean, suddenly, from the opposite quarter,

[1] "Hist. Va." I. 53. [2] C. Campbell, "Hist. Va." 256.

out of the abysses of the woods, there swept toward them the heart-shaking terror of an aggressive Indian war. In a tumult and thicket of miseries like this, the people called earnestly upon the royal governor, Sir William Berkeley, as their military and civil chief, to take the necessary measures for repelling these horrid assaults—to organize the people into an army and to lead them against the foe, so that a thousand scattered homes might be protected from the peril that was moving swiftly toward them. For reasons that cannot here be described in detail—the basest reasons of jealousy, indolence, selfishness, and especially avarice—this renowned governor gave to the people promises of help, and promises only. But something was to be done at once by somebody. Nearer and nearer came the great danger, and still bloodier and more frequent became the onslaughts of the Indians. Then the people arose in their anger, and since their governor would not lead them to the war, with unanimous voice they called upon one of their own number to be their leader, Nathaniel Bacon, a man only thirty years of age, of considerable landed wealth, of high social connections, a lawyer trained in the Inns of Court in London, an orator of commanding eloquence, a man who by his endowments of brain and eye and hand was a natural leader and king of men. He, already exasperated against the Indians by injuries inflicted on his own family, obeyed the call of the people. He led them against the Indians, whom he drove back with tremendous punishment. But by the jealous and haughty despot in the governor's chair, he was at once proclaimed a rebel; a price was set upon his head; and the people who followed him were put under ban for the crime of doing the duty which the governor himself would not do—the crime of defending their own homes from butchery and flame. Then followed a series of swift conflicts, military and political, between Bacon and the governor; and at last, in that same year, Bacon himself died, suddenly and mysteriously, leaving no

competent successor to carry on the struggle; sadder than all, leaving no barrier between his devoted and now forlorn followers, and the heated vengeance of Sir William Berkeley. Twenty-five persons were hung or shot to soothe that vengeance,—an atrocious fact, which, when reported in England, drew from Charles the Second the indolent sneer that "the old fool had taken away more lives in that naked country, than himself had taken for the murder of his father.[1]

It would have been strange indeed if a great popular movement like this—so deep, passionate, so full of tragic and picturesque incident, and concentrated about a hero who had every personal attribute to inthrall the imaginations of the people—had not found expression in some contemporaneous literary form. And yet for more than a hundred years afterward it was not known that there had been any such expression. Shortly after our Revolutionary War, however, it was discovered that in an old and honorable family in the Northern Neck of Virginia, some manuscripts had been preserved, evidently belonging to the seventeenth century, evidently written by one or more of the adherents of Nathaniel Bacon, and casting much new light upon Bacon's character, and upon the tumultuous events with which his name is connected.[2]

In studying these writings, produced in Virginia in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, every one will be likely to notice the total transformation in the spirit and form of prose style which they represent, when compared with the writings produced in Virginia during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. In the more modern compositions we find no longer the childlike unconsciousness, the idiomatic ease, the simple, fluent, brave picturesqueness that attracted our notice and excited our

[1] Williamson, "Hist. North Carolina," I. 229.

[2] These manuscripts were first printed in 2 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. I. 27–80, and are sometimes called the Burwell Papers from the name of a family in King William County by whom they were first given to the public.

pleasure in the earlier ones. Evidently between these two groups of writings have passed fifty years of intellectual change, during which, at the metropolis of English speech and of English literature, fantastic poetry and literary quibbling have come into vogue. Evidently in this interval the strength of writers in our tongue has been given to the chase after conceits and surprises in style; the reign of French mannerisms has come in with the reign of the second Charles, and with it the ambition for smartness of phrase, for epigram, antithesis, and pun. The author of the prose portions of these manuscripts reflects, on this side of the ocean, the literary foibles that were in fashion on the other side of the ocean. He composes his sentences as if he were writing for a club of jaded London wits, and were conscious of being unable, by the inward worth of his ideas, to hold their flabby attention, and of having to do so by continually fluttering in their faces the ribbons and tassels of his brisk phrases. But apart from the disagreeable air of verbal affectation and of effort in these writings, they are undeniably spirited; they produce before us departed scenes with no little energy and life; and the flavor of mirth which seasons them is not unpleasant.

The writer gives, in the first place, an account of the preliminary troubles with the Indians; then of the invocation to Bacon to lead the people, who had no other leader; then of prominent events, political and military, during Bacon's brief but most magnanimous and most efficient public career; finally of his death, and of the futile efforts of a worthless fellow named Ingram to catch the hero's mantle, and to play out the remainder of the hero's part. The introductory sentences of the narrative have perished; and the story opens in a broken way with a description of a band of Indians besieged in some rude, extemporized fortification of theirs, by a half-organized army of white men. The Indians "found that their store was too short to endure a long siege without making empty bellies; and that empty bellies make weak hearts,

which always makes an unfit serving man to wait upon the god of war. Therefore, they were resolved, before that their spirits were down, to do what they could to keep their stores up, as opportunities should befriend them; and although they were by the law of arms, as the case now stood, prohibited the hunting of wild deer, they resolved to see what good might be done by hunting tame horses; which trade became their sport so long that those [white men] who came on horse-back to the siege began to fear they should be compelled to trot home afoot, and glad if they scaped so too. For these beleaguered blades made so many sallies, and the besiegers kept such negligent guards, that there was very few days passed without some remarkable mischief. But what can hold out always? Even stone walls yields to the not-to-be-gainsaid summons of time." The narrative goes on to relate how, driven by hunger, the besieged Indians at last sent out six of their chief men as commissioners to negotiate a peace with the English; and how the latter, instead of negotiating a peace with the commissioners, knocked out their brains. This unpleasant reception was somewhat discouraging to the Indians in the fort, who resolved "to forsake their station, and not to expostulate the cause any further. Having made this resolution, and destroyed all things in the fort that might be serviceable to the English, they boldly, undiscovered, slip through the leaguer, leaving the English to prosecute the siege, as Schogin's wife brooded the eggs that the fox had sucked." Thus the Indians broke out of the pen in which they had been rather carelessly cooped up, and fled away to their forests; but they fled away only to return again at their pleasure, and in larger force, and to swoop down with unsparing havoc upon every white settlement that they could find unprotected. In this hour of extreme danger, the people called Nathaniel Bacon to be their leader, a man endeared to them not so much for what "he had yet done as the cause of their affections," as for "what they expected he would

do to deserve their devotion; while with no common zeal they send up their reiterated prayers, first to himself and next to heaven, that he may become their guardian angel, to protect them from the cruelties of the Indians, against whom this gentleman had a perfect antipathy."

An account is then given at some length of the energetic measures taken by Bacon against the Indians, of the anger of the governor against him, and of the adroitness with which the parasites of the governor devised means to inflame his anger more and more. "They began . . . to have Bacon's merits in mistrust, as a luminary that threatened an eclipse to their rising glories; for though he was but a young man, yet they found that he was master and owner of those induements which constitute a complete man." Meanwhile Bacon himself fell upon the Indians "with abundance of resolution and gallantry . . . in their fastness, killing a great many and blowing up their magazine of arms and powder;" though proclaimed a rebel he then returned home; was elected member of the colonial assembly; was taken prisoner by the governor, and brought to trial upon the charge of rebellion. He was, however, "not only acquitted and pardoned all misdemeanors, but restored to the council-table," and was likewise promised a commission "as general for the Indian war to the universal satisfaction of the people who passionately desired the same. . . . And here who can do less than wonder at the mutable and impermanent deportments of that blind goddess, Fortune, who in the morning loads man with disgraces and ere night crowns him with honors, sometimes depressing and again elevating, as her fickle humor is to smile or frown. . . . For in the morning, before his trial, he was in his enemies' hopes and his friends' fears, judged for to receive the guerdon due to a rebel; . . . and ere night, crowned the darling of the people's hopes and desires, as the only man fit in Virginia to put a stop unto the bloody resolutions of the heathen. And yet again, as a fuller manifesta-

tion of Fortune's inconstancy, within two or three days the people's hopes and his desires were both frustrated by the governor's refusing to sign the promised commission." Upon this, Bacon determined no longer to be trifled with, and hurried once more to the capital at the head of five hundred men in arms. His demand for a commission, backed up by such logic, could not be refused; but he had no sooner got it and got out of sight with it, on his way to fight the Indians, than this fine old governor mustered up courage still again to proclaim the young hero a rebel. "The noise of which proclamation . . . soon reached the general's ears not yet stopped up from listening to apparent dangers. This strange and unexpected news put him and some with him shrewdly to their trumps. . . . It vexed him to the heart, as he was heard to say, for to think that while he was a-hunting wolves, tigers, and foxes, which daily destroyed our harmless sheep and lambs, he and those with him should be pursued in the rear with a full cry, as a more savage or no less ravenous beast." The story is then told of the difficult part that Bacon had to play, with one arm keeping back the Indians from murdering the people, and with the other keeping back the governor from murdering him. His white enemies never dared to confront him upon the open field; and even in a campaign of stratagem, they found him more than a match for them. Of his ability to cope with them in craft as well as in force, one amusing incident is given. On learning that he had once more been treated with perfidy by the governor and had been proclaimed a rebel in spite of his commission, Bacon, "with a marvellous celerity, outstripping the swift wings of fame," pushed back to Jamestown, and in a trice blocked up the governor there, "to the general astonishment of the whole country, especially when that Bacon's numbers was known, which at this time did not exceed above a hundred and fifty. . . . Yet not knowing but that the paucity of his numbers being once known to those in town, it might raise

their hearts to a degree of courage, having so much the odds, . . . he thought it not amiss, since the lion's strength was too weak, to strengthen the same with the fox's brains. . . . For immediately he despatcheth two or three parties of horse, . . . to bring into the camp some of the prime gentlewomen whose husbands were in town; where, when arrived, he sends one of them to inform her own and the others' husbands, for what purposes he had brought them into the camp, namely, to be placed in the forefront of his men, at such time as those in town should sally forth upon him. The poor gentlewomen were mightily astonished at this project, neither were their husbands void of amazements at this subtle invention. If Mr. Fuller thought it strange that the Devil's black guard should be enrolled God's soldiers, they made it no less wonderful that their innocent and harmless wives should thus be entered a white guard to the Devil. This action was a method in war that they were not well acquainted with, . . . that before they could come to pierce their enemies' sides, they must be obliged to dart their weapons through their wives' breast. . . . Whether it was these considerations or some others, I do not know, that kept their swords in their scabbards; but this is manifest, that Bacon knit more knots by his own head in one day than all the hands in town was able to untie in a whole week; while these ladies' white aprons became of greater force to keep the besieged from sallying out than his works—a pitiful trench—had strength to repel the weakest shot that should have been sent into his leaguer, had he not made use of this invention."

But through all that terrible summer of 1676, events trod upon one another's heels; and by the first of October the chief actor in them suddenly died—broken down, as many believed, by exposure, anxiety, and fatigue; or, as others suspected, taken off by poison. The old manuscript tells of the event in characteristic military metaphor: "Bacon having for some time been besieged by

sickness, and now not able to hold out any longer, all his strength and provisions being spent, surrendered up that fort he was no longer able to keep, into the hands of that grim and all-conquering captain, Death."

As the cause of his death was a mystery, so a mystery covered even the place of his burial; for his friends, desiring to save his lifeless body from violation at the hands of the victorious party, placed it secretly in the earth; "but where deposited," says the old manuscript, "till the General Day, not known only to those who are resolutely silent in that particular." And the love of Bacon's followers, which in his lifetime had shown itself in services of passionate devotion, and which, after his death, thus hovered as a protecting silence over his hidden grave, found expression also in some sorrowing verses that, upon the whole, are of astonishing poetic merit. Who may have been the author of these verses, it is perhaps now impossible to discover. They are prefaced by the quaint remark that after Bacon "was dead, he was bemoaned in these following lines, drawn by the man that waited upon his person as it is said, and who attended his corpse to their burial place." Of course this statement is but a blind: the author of such a eulogy of the dead rebel could not safely avow himself. But certainly no menial of Bacon's, no mere "man that waited upon his person," could have written this noble dirge, which has a stateliness, a compressed energy, and a mournful eloquence, reminding one of the commemorative verse of Ben Jonson.

"Death, why so cruel? What! no other way
To manifest thy spleen, but thus to slay
Our hopes of safety, liberty, our all,
Which, through thy tyranny, with him must fall
To its late chaos? Had thy rigid force
Been dealt by retail, and not thus in gross,
Grief had been silent. Now, we must complain,
Since thou in him hast more than thousands slain;
Whose lives and safeties did so much depend
On him their life, with him their lives must end.

If 't be a sin to think Death bribed can be,
We must be guilty ; say 't was bribery
Guided the fatal shaft. Virginia's foes,
To whom for secret crimes just vengeance owes
Deservëd plagues, dreading their just desert,
Corrupted Death by Paracelsian art
Him to destroy ; whose well-tried courage such,
Their heartless hearts, nor arms, nor strength could touch.
Who now must heal those wounds, or stop that blood
The heathen made, and drew into a flood ?
Who is 't must plead our cause ? Nor trump, nor drum,
Nor deputations ; these, alas, are dumb,
And cannot speak. Our arms—though ne'er so strong—
Will want the aid of his commanding tongue,
Which conquered more than Cæsar : he o'erthrew
Only the outward frame; this could subdue
The rugged works of nature. Souls replete
With dull chill cold, he'd animate with heat
Drawn forth of reason's lymbic. In a word
Mars and Minerva both in him concurred
For arts, for arms, whose pen and sword alike,
As Cato's did, may admiration strike
Into his foes ; while they confess withal,
It was their guilt styled him a criminal.
Only this difference doth from truth proceed,
They in the guilt, he in the name, must bleed;
While none shall dare his obsequies to sing
In deservëd measures, until Time shall bring
Truth crowned with freedom, and from danger free;
To sound his praises to posterity.

Here let him rest ; while we this truth report,
He's gone from hence unto a higher court,
To plead his cause, where he by this doth know
Whether to Cæsar he was friend or foe." [1]

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[1] This poem and all the foregoing prose quotations relating to Bacon, are cited from the printed copy of them given in 2 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. I. 27–62 ; but as that copy was very inaccurately made, I have corrected my quotations by collating them with the perfect copy subsequently printed by the same society. See their "Proceedings" for 1866–1867. The authorship of these interesting manuscripts is still a matter of conjecture. My own opinion is that they were written by one Cotton, of Acquia

Who was there in Virginia two hundred years ago with the genius and the literary practice to write these masterly verses? They alone shed splendor upon the intellectual annals of Virginia for the seventeenth century. If much of that century was for her a literary desert, these verses form a delightful oasis in it.

IV.

During the first epoch in the history of American literature, there were but two localities which produced in the English language anything that can be called literature, —Virginia and New England. We have now inspected whatever literature sprang up in Virginia in the course of that period; and before passing to the investigation of the literature of New England for the same time, we need to stop and review the ground we have already traversed, and gather, if we may, the choicest fruit to be had from studies like these.

As we have seen, there were in Virginia, during the first twenty years of its existence, as many as six authors who there produced writings that live yet and deserve to live. But at the end of that period and for the remainder of the century, nearly all literary activity in Virginia ceased; the only exception to this statement being the brief anonymous literary memorials which have come down to us from the wrathful and calamitous uprising of the people under Nathaniel Bacon. Even of those six writers of the first two decades, all excepting one, Alexander Whitaker, flitted back to England after a brief residence in Virginia: so that besides Whitaker, the colony had during all that period no writer who gave his name to her as being willing to identify himself permanently with

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Creek, husband of Ann Cotton, and author of a letter written from Jamestown, June 9, 1676, printed in Force, Hist. Tracts, I. No. 9. For this opinion, which I suppose to be new, the reasons cannot be given here.

her fate, and to live and die in her immediate service. This, as we shall see in our further studies, is in startling contrast to the contemporaneous record of New England, which, even in that early period, had a great throng of writers, nearly all of whom took root in her soil.

These, then, are the salient facts in the early literary history of Virginia. They are certainly very remarkable facts. How do we account for them?

First of all, we need to ask, who were the people who during that great epoch founded the Old Dominion of Virginia? What sort of people were they? Of what texture of body and brain and spirit? What were they as regards industry, enterprise, thrift? What were their predominant notions concerning church and state? Especially, what did they come to America for? And what were they living for, principally, whether in America or anywhere else? If we can work out for ourselves the true answers to these questions, we shall be able to see why we might expect to get out of the people of Virginia, during the seventeenth century and afterward, no great amount of literature: hospitality, courtly manners, military leadership, political acumen, statesmanship, but not many books.

A foolish boast still floats on the current of talk, to the effect that Virginia was originally populated to a large extent by families of wealth and of aristocratic rank in England. On the other hand a cruel taunt is sometimes heard in response to this boast, to the effect that the first families of Virginia have really sprung from the loins of bastards, bankrupts, fugitives, transported criminals, and other equivocal Englishmen, who in the seventeenth century left their country for their country's good. The truth seems to lie in neither of these statements alone, but in both of them mixed together and mutually modified. For the first forty years the larger portion of the settlers in Virginia were of inferior quality, personally and socially: many of them were tramps from the pavements of London; vagrants who wandered to Virginia because

they had to wander somewhere; gentlemen of fashion who were out at the elbow; aristocrats gone to seed; "'broken men,' adventurers, bankrupts, criminals."[1] Indeed, for some time after the first few ship-loads had gone out to Virginia, and the news had come back to England of the perils and distresses that the colonists were fallen into, not even paupers and knaves would any longer go there of their own accord, and the company in London became "humble suitors to his Majesty" to compel "vagabonds and condemned men to go thither. Nay, . . . some did choose to be hanged before they would go thither, and were."[2] In the year 1611, Sir Thomas Dale sailed out to Virginia with three hundred emigrants, whom, to use his own words, he gathered "in riotous, lazy, and infected places: such disordered persons, so profane, so riotous, so full of mutiny and treasonable intendments, that in a parcel of three hundred not many gave testimony, beside their names, that they were Christians; and besides, were of such diseased and crazed bodies that the sea-voyage hither and the climate here, but a little scratching them, render them so unable, faint, and desperate of recovery, that . . . not three score may be employed upon any labor or service."[3] But by the year 1617, and thenceforward for many years, the cultivation of tobacco in Virginia became so profitable that the labor even of English convicts was welcome; and they were accordingly transported thither in large numbers and became gradually merged in the general population of the country. In 1619, the first negro slaves were imported into the colony; and thereafter their presence contributed a new element of prosperity and of woe to Virginia. From about the year 1640 to the year 1660, that is during the period of the civil war and of the commonwealth in England,

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[1] J. R. Green, "A Short Hist. of the English People," Harper's ed. 498.
[2] Capt. J. Smith, "Gen. Hist." in Pinkerton, XIII. 240.
[3] Aspinwall Papers, 4 Mass. Hist. Coll. IX. 1, note.

many persons of much finer and stronger quality emigrated to Virginia; men of force and weight in England, churchmen, cavaliers, who, especially when the cause of the king became hopeless, very naturally moved away to Virginia to find there a permanent home, and a refuge from the odious ascendency of Cromwell and his Puritans. At the restoration in 1660, still another class of emigrants, also forceful and worthy, passed over to Virginia, men of the Cromwellian party, a few even of his iron-sided troopers, who did not care to abide in sight of the jubilant cavaliers, and who chose Virginia in preference to New England, on account of its more genial climate. Moreover, long before the close of the seventeenth century, Virginia had placed severe restrictions upon the importation of malefactors into the colony. Of course, from the first these colonists, whether of weak type or strong, were mostly of the party of the English church, and of royalist views in politics. Unlike the first colonists in New England, they had no dispute with the established order of things in old England; and made Virginia, not a digression from English society, but, as George Bancroft happily describes it, "a continuation of English society."[1] As compared with the people of New England, they of Virginia were less austere, less enterprising, less industrious, more worldly, more self-indulgent; they were impatient of asceticism, of cant, of long faces, of long prayers; they rejoiced in games, sports, dances, merry music, and in a free, jovial, roistering life.

In close connection with this study of the people who in our earliest age came to Virginia, we need to observe the most characteristic features of the social organization that they formed after they got there. Though they were of the same stock and speech as the founders of New England, in ideas they were very different; and at once proceeding to incarnate their ideas in the visible

[1] Bancroft, "Hist. U. S." II. 190.

frame of society, they erected in Virginia a fabric of church and state which was of course a veracious expression of themselves, and which presents an almost perfect antithesis to the fabric of church and state which at about the same time began to be erected in New England. The germ of the whole difference between them lay in their different notions concerning the value of vicinity among the units of society. The founders of New England were inclined to settle in groups of families forming neighborhoods, villages, and at last cities; from which it resulted that among them there was a constant play of mind upon mind; mutual stimulation, mutual forbearance also; likewise an easier and more frequent reciprocation of the social forces and benefits; facility in conducting the various industries and trades; facility in maintaining churches, schools, and higher literary organizations; facility in the interchange of books, letters, and the like. The course chosen by the founders of Virginia was precisely the opposite of this: they were inclined to settle not in groups of families forming neighborhoods, but in detached establishments forming individualized domestic centres. They brought with them, as a type of the highest human felicity, the memory of the English territorial lord, seated proudly in his own castle, breasting back all human interference by miles and miles of his own land, which lay outspread in all directions from the view of his castle-windows. Their ambition was to become territorial lords in Virginia; to own vast tracts of land, even though unimproved; to set up imitations—crude and cheap imitations they necessarily were—of the vast and superb baronial establishments which they had gazed at in the mother-country. And many things united to favor them in this wish. It was extremely easy to get large tracts of land in Virginia. Every settler received at the outset a king's grant of fifty acres for himself and for each person transported by him to Virginia; and in addition to this, by a fee of a few shillings to a clerk in the secretary's office,

grants could be accumulated upon grants.[1] Moreover Virginia is veined by a multitude of navigable rivers; so that every man who wished to segregate himself in his own mansion, amid a vast territorial solitude, needed not to wait for the construction of a public road to enable him to get to it, and occasionally to get from it; but by erecting his house near to a river bank, he could find almost at his door a convenient shipping-point for the productions of his farm, and a convenient means of ingress and egress for himself and his friends. Thus, from the first, while the social structure of New England was that of concentration, the social structure of Virginia was that of dispersion. The one sought personal community, the other domestic isolation: the one developed coöperation in civil affairs, in mechanism, in trade, in culture, in religion; the other developed solitary action in all these, and consequently made but little progress in any of them: the one tended to mitigate individualism by a thousand social compromises; the other tended to stimulate individualism through an indulgence of it untempered by any adequate colliding personal force. Let any one cast his eye on a map of Virginia for the seventeenth century. He will find local names on that map; but those local names do not indicate cities, or even villages, but merely theoretic organizations of church and state—parishes, over which the inhabitants were so widely scattered that no man could have seen his neighbor without looking through a telescope, or be heard by him without firing off a gun. George Bancroft does not exaggerate when, in speaking of Virginia for the latter part of the seventeenth century, he says, "There was hardly such a sight as a cluster of three dwellings."[2] Even Jamestown, the capital, had but a state-house, one church, and eighteen private houses.

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[1] C. Campbell, "Hist. Va." 350. Also "Virginia's Cure," 1662, in Force Hist. Tracts, III. No. 15, 8.

[2] Bancroft, "Hist. U. S." II. 212.

Since the units of this dispersed community inclined thus to isolation rather than to close fellowship, it followed that all those public tasks which depend on coöperation were ill done, or not done at all: the making of high roads, bridges; the erection of court-houses, school-houses, churches; the promotion of commercial and manufacturing establishments; postal communication; literary interchanges, the involuntary traffic of ideas. In short, the tendency of the social structure in Virginia was from the first toward a sort of rough extemporaneous feudalism, toward the grandeur and the weakness of the patriarchal state, rather than toward those complex, elaborate, and refined results which are the achievements of an advanced modern civilization, and which can be procured only by the units of society pulling together, instead of pulling apart. There was considerable individual property: there was no public thrift. Manual labor was of course scorned by the man who owned slaves, and was the master of a baronial hall with its far-stretching empire of wild lands. From him likewise descended to his inferiors the sentiment of contempt for labor,—the notion that labor was not any man's glory, but his shame. Their earliest historian born in Virginia, Robert Beverley, himself of a distinguished Virginian family, writing just at the dawn of the eighteenth century, fills his book with sarcasms at the indolence and shiftlessness of his fellow-countrymen. Naming Virginia, he says: "I confess I am ashamed to say anything of its improvements, because I must at the same time reproach my countrymen with a laziness that is unpardonable."[1] "They are such abominable ill-husbands,[2] that though their country be overrun with wood, yet they have all their wooden ware from England—their cabinets, chairs, tables, stools, chests, boxes, cart-wheels, and all other things, even so much as their bowls and

[1] Beverley, "Hist. Va." Book IV. 59.

[2] *i. e.*, bad economists.

birchen brooms, to the eternal reproach of their laziness."[1] "Thus they depend altogether upon the liberality of nature, without endeavoring to improve its gifts by art or industry. They sponge upon the blessings of a warm sun and a fruitful soil, and almost grutch the pains of gathering in the bounties of the earth."[2]

The dispersed social organization of Virginia had effects as evil in the direction of religious institutions, as in the direction of material enterprise and thrift. "The Virginia parishes," says Charles Campbell, "were so extensive that parishioners sometimes lived at the distance of fifty miles from the parish church;" hence, "paganism, atheism, or sectaries."[3]

But the result which immediately concerns us in our present studies has to do with the intellectual development of the people. First of all, then, in those highly rarefied communities, where almost nothing was in common, how could there be common schools?[4] To have included within a school-district a sufficient number of families to constitute a school, the distances for many of the pupils would have been so great as to render attendance impracticable. For the first three generations there were almost no schools at all in Virginia. The historian Burk says that "until the year 1688 no mention is anywhere made in the records, of schools or of any provision for the instruction of youth."[5] Who can wonder that under such circumstances the children in most cases grew up in ignorance; and that the historian Campbell should be obliged to testify that the first and second generations

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[1] Beverley, "Hist. Va." Book IV. 58.

[2] Ibid. 83.

[3] "Hist. Va." 382. Also "Va.'s Cure," in Force, III. No. 15, 4, 5.

[4] "Va.'s Cure," in Force, Hist. Tracts, III. No. 15, 6.

[5] "Hist. Va." II. Appendix, xxxi. But the author of "A Perfect Descrip. of Va.," A. D. 1648, mentions "a free school and other petty schools." Force, Hist. Tracts, II. No. 8, 13.

of those born in Virginia were inferior in knowledge to their ancestors?[1]

If primary education was so grossly neglected in Virginia during the seventeenth century, we hardly need to ask what could have been the condition of higher education there during the same period. Near the end of this century, when all English-speaking communities were finally delivered from the Stuart incubus, and when all those communities on both sides of the ocean seemed to take a fresh start toward nobler things in civilization, we find traces of an educational awakening in Virginia. Among other traces of this awakening was the suggestion of a college, which in 1692 took tangible form in the establishment of the institution named in honor of the monarchs, William and Mary. In the eighteenth century this college did much to stimulate and guide the intellectual life of the colony; but we must not be misled by its imposing name. It was called a college; but during its earlier years it was only a boarding-school for very young boys in very rudimental studies.

Thus it must be seen that Virginia in the seventeenth century was entitled to the description which Sir Philip Sidney gave to Ireland in the sixteenth century,—a place "where truly learning goeth very bare."[2] Indeed, so late as the year 1715, Governor Spotswood dissolved the colonial assembly of Virginia with this taunt upon the educational defects of a body composed of their principal gentry: "I observe that the grand ruling party in your house has not furnished chairmen of two of your standing committees who can spell English or write common sense, as the grievances under their own handwriting will manifest."[3]

It must not be supposed that the people of Virginia were generally indifferent to the intellectual disadvan-

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[1] "Hist. Va." 352. [2] "Apologie for Poetrie," Arber's ed. 22.
[3] C. Campbell, "Hist. Va." 395.

tages accruing to them from their peculiar social organization. Especially did they grieve over the lack of educational privileges for their children; and from time to time they suggested methods for the establishment of accessible public schools. But they were in the gripe of hostile circumstances, and all their efforts were for that day vain. Besides, during a large portion of the seventeenth century, they had the affliction of a royal governor, Sir William Berkeley, who threw the whole weight of his office and the whole energy of his despotic will in favor of the fine old conservative policy of keeping subjects ignorant in order to keep them submissive. This policy, which he most consistently maintained throughout his entire administration, from 1641 to 1677, was frankly avowed by him in his celebrated reply to the English commissioners who in 1670 questioned him concerning the condition of Virginia: "I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing; and I hope we shall not have, these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."[1] We owe to Sir William the meed of our cordial acknowledgment that at least in this article of his creed he never failed to show his faith by his works, and that he did his best while governor of Virginia to secure the answer of his own dark prayer. And unfortunately when he was recalled from Virginia, his policy for the encouragement of popular ignorance was not recalled with him: on the contrary it was continued by the government at home, and was prescribed in the official instructions laid upon his successors. There is no record of a printing-press in Virginia earlier than 1681; and soon after a printing-press was set up, the printer was summoned before Lord Culpepper and required to enter into bonds "not to print anything hereafter, until his majesty's pleasure shall be

[1] Hening, II. 511.

known,"[1]—a gracious way of intimating a perpetual prohibition. In 1683, when Lord Effingham came out as governor of Virginia, he received from the ministry instructions "to allow no person to use a printing-press on any occasion whatsoever."[2] From that date onward till about the year 1729, no printing was done in Virginia; and from 1729 until ten years before the Declaration of Independence, Virginia had but one printing-house, and even that "was thought to be too much under the control of the governor."[3] What a base extremity of intolerance! And how base the popular listlessness which could permit it! In other countries it has been thought hard enough to have the printing-press clogged by the interference of official licensers and spies; in Virginia the printing-press was forbidden to work at all. There, even the first thrust of the press-man's lever was a crime.

The whole truth with reference to the intellectual condition of Virginia in the seventeenth century will not become manifest to us, unless we rest our eyes on still another trait. Thought was not free in Virginia; religion was not free in Virginia; and this by the explicit and reiterated choice of the people of Virginia. The Puritan zealots of New England have for a hundred years borne the just censure of mankind for their religious intolerance,—their ungentle treatment of Baptists, Quakers, and witches. These pages are not to be stained by any apology for religious intolerance in New England. But in simple fairness we may not close our eyes to the fact—seldom mentioned and little known—that the jovial fox-hunters of Virginia, the cant-despising cavaliers of the Old Dominion, were not a whit less guilty of religious intolerance. We are informed by Burk[4] of the burning of witches

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[1] Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." I. 331.
[2] Chalmers, "Political Annals," I. 345.
[3] Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." I. 332.
[4] "Hist. Va." II. Appendix, xxxi.

in Virginia; and as to the molestation of men for their religious opinions, we are told by Campbell that so early as the year 1632 an act of the assembly of Virginia laid upon all who dissented from the Episcopal Church as there established "the penalty of the pains and forfeitures in that case appointed."[1] Just thirty years later, the same assembly imposed a fine of two thousand pounds of tobacco on "schismatical persons" that would not have their children baptized; and on persons who attended other religious meetings than those of the established church, a penalty of two hundred pounds of tobacco for the first offence, of five hundred pounds of tobacco for the second offence, and of banishment for the third offence.[2] Marriage was not tolerated under any other form than that of the Prayer Book. No one, unless a member of the established church, might instruct the young, even in a private family. Any shipmaster who should convey non-conformist passengers to Virginia was to be punished. Against Quakers as well as Baptists the severest laws were passed; and in 1664 large numbers of the former were prosecuted. Indeed, religious persecution remained rampant and flourishing in Virginia long after it had died of its own shame in New England. As late as 1741 penal laws were enacted in Virginia against Presbyterians and all other dissenters.[3] As late as 1746 the most savage penalties were denounced there against Moravians, New Lights, and Methodists.[4] In the presence of this array of facts relating to the people of Virginia in its primal days, and to the social organization that they created there, is not the phenomenon of the comparative literary barrenness of Virginia fully ex-

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[1] "Hist Va." 185. [2] Ibid. 258. [3] Ibid. 442.

[4] Burk, "Hist. Va." III. 125. For other authorities upon early religious intolerance in Va., see Bancroft, "Hist. U. S." II. 190, 192, 201, 202; Beverley, "Hist. Va." ed. of 1855, 210, 212; R. R. Howison, "Hist. Va." I. 317–321; Hildreth, "Hist. U. S." I. 126, 336; W. C. Rives, "Life of Madison," I. 41–55; Writings of Washington, II. 481; Works of Jefferson, I. 38, 39, 174, VIII. 398–402.

plained? How could literature have sprouted and thriven amid such conditions? Had much literature been produced there, would it not have been a miracle? The units of the community isolated; little chance for mind to kindle mind; no schools; no literary institutions high or low; no public libraries; no printing-press; no intellectual freedom; no religious freedom; the forces of society tending to create two great classes,—a class of vast landowners, haughty, hospitable, indolent, passionate, given to field-sports and politics, and a class of impoverished white plebeians and black serfs;—these constitute a situation out of which may be evolved country-gentlemen, loud-lunged and jolly fox-hunters, militia heroes, men of boundless domestic heartiness and social grace, astute and imperious politicians, fiery orators, and by and by, here and there, some men of elegant literary culture, mostly acquired abroad; here and there, perhaps, after a while, a few amateur literary men; but no literary class, and almost no literature.

CHAPTER V.

NEW ENGLAND TRAITS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

I.—Transition from Virginia to New England—The race-qualities of the first New-Englanders—The period of their coming—Their numbers, and the multitude of their posterity.

II.—Two classes of Englishmen in the seventeenth century; those resting upon the world's attainments, those demanding a new departure—From the second class came the New-Englanders—The purpose of their coming an ideal one.

III.—Their intellectuality—The large number of their learned men—Their esteem for learning.

IV.—Their earnestness of character—Religion the master-thought—Their conceptions of providence and of prayer—Their religious intensity leading to moroseness, to spiritual pedantry, to a jurisprudence based on theology, and to persecution.

V.—The outward forms of New England life—Its prosperity—Literature in early New England—A literary class from the first—Circumstances favorable to literary action—The limits of their literary studies—Restraints upon the liberty of printing—Other disadvantages—The quality in them which gave assurance of literary development.

I.

JUST thirteen years after American civilization had established its first secure outpost upon the soil of Virginia, it succeeded in establishing a second outpost, four hundred miles northward, in that bleaker and more rugged portion of the continent which bears a name suggestive of tender and loyal memories—the name of New England. Thus, within so brief a period, were the beginnings made in the task of planting those two great colonial communities of English blood and speech, Virginia and New England, which, with many things in common, had still more

things in contrast, and which have been the "two great distributing centres of the English race"[1] in America.

But who, and of what sort, were these people who in the seventeenth century took possession of New England, and who through their descendants hold possession of it still? At the first glance we see that they were a prolific race, marrying early, and if opportunity presented, marrying often; never declining to rejoice in having their houses "edified and beautified with many children."[2] The first English settlers began to come to New England in 1620; during the subsequent ten years their immigration was slow and slight; but between 1630 and 1640 they came in multitudes, thronging every ship that pointed its prow hitherward. With the latter year, suddenly, all immigration stopped; for the opening of the Long Parliament, by giving to the English Puritans the hope of curing the ills in church and state which they had suffered at home, took from them the impulse to escape from those ills by going abroad. Since the year 1640, the New England race has not received any notable addition to its original stock; and to-day their Anglican blood is as genuine and as unmixed as that of any county in England. In the year 1640 there were in New England twelve independent groups of colonists, fifty towns, a total population of about twenty-one thousand souls.[3] During the one hundred and twenty-five years following that date, more persons, it is supposed, went back from the New to the Old England than came from the Old England to the New.[4] Yet so thrifty and teeming have been these New-Englanders, that from that primal community of twenty-one thousand persons have descended the three and a half millions who compose the present population of New England; while of the entire

[1] James Russell Lowell, "Among My Books," 1st series, 239.

[2] C. Mather, "Magnalia," I. 498.

[3] Francis A. Walker, in "First Century of the Republic," 215, who here adopts the opinions of Bancroft and Hildreth.

[4] T. Hutchinson, "Hist. Mass. Bay," I. Pref. iii.

population now spread over the United States, probably every third person can read in the history of the first settlement of New England the history of his own progenitors.[1] It hardly needs to be mentioned, after this, that the conditions of life there were not at all those for which Malthus subsequently invented his theory of inhospitality to infants. Population was sparse; work was plentiful; food was plentiful; and the arrival in the household of a new child was not the arrival of a new appetite among a brood of children already half fed,—it was rather the arrival of a new helper where help was scarcer than food; it was in fact a fresh installment from heaven of what they called, on Biblical authority, the very "heritage of the Lord." The typical household of New England was one of patriarchal populousness. Of all the sayings of the Hebrew Psalmist—except perhaps the damnatory ones—it is likely that they rejoiced most in those which expressed the Davidic appreciation of multitudinous children: "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." The New-Englanders had for many years quite a number of enemies in the gate, whom they wished to be able to speak with, in the unabashed manner intimated by the devout warrior of Israel.[2]

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[1] J. G. Palfrey, "Hist. N. E." I. Pref. ix.

[2] Pleasant examples of the early New England family meet one at almost every turn in the field of New England biography. The sturdy patriot, Roger Clap of Dorchester, was happy in the possession of fourteen children, among whom were Experience, Waitstill, Preserved, Hopestill, Wait, Thanks, Desire, Unite, and Supply. Cotton Mather was not so abundant in children as he was in books, since of the former he had only fifteen. Benjamin Franklin was one of seventeen children; and in his autobiography he recalls the cheerful picture of thirteen of them seated all at once at his father's table, "who all arrived to years of maturity and were married." William Phips, who attained the honor of knighthood, and became a royal governor of Mas-

II.

The personal traits of the original New-Englanders were in many ways remarkable. To know these people we need to know the people from whom they came. The English race has been described as one having practical sagacity rather than ideas; as being weighted by grossness of fibre, sluggishness, animal instincts, earthly preferences; as caring more for dull precedents than for brilliant intuitions; as making whatever progress it achieves by feeling its way safely step by step, rather than by projecting its way boldly from the beginning with the easy infallibility of abstract reasoners. There is some truth in this description; but it is far from being the whole truth. Especially far is it from being the whole truth if applied to the English people as they were in the first half of the seventeenth century. At that time, though they were apparently divided into many classes, they were really divided into only two:—first, the disciples of things as they are; second, the disciples of things as they ought to be.[1] Without doubt, in the first of these two classes were included vast numbers of thoughtful and noble natures, who with intelligent deliberation accepted things as established notwithstanding their faults, rather than encounter the frightful risk of having all things unsettled, and of making them worse in the very attempt to make them better; but in this class, likewise, were included the still larger number

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sachusetts, was the son of a poor gunsmith of Pemaquid, and belonged to a flock of twenty-six children, all of them of the same father and mother, and twenty-one of them sons.

[1] Of course this distinction is to be seen among any people who have begun to think; but it is particularly to be seen among the English people at the period just mentioned. At that time they were especially given to thinking, and their thinking was turned in an uncommon degree to this particular dispute between what is and what ought to be,—in which dispute, indeed, they were then taking sides openly, with dangerous weapons in their hands.

of those whose natures were neither noble nor thoughtful, and whose conservatism was only the expression of their intellectual torpor, their frivolity, their sensualism, their narrowness, or their cowardice. As to the second class, it certainly included many base persons also, many crack-brained and shallow persons, multitudes who shouted and wrangled for change, impelled to it by all sorts of contemptible motives,—aimless discontent, curiosity, lust, lawlessness, folly, cruelty, ambition, hope of pillage amid the wreck of other people's possessions. Nevertheless in this class, if anywhere, were to be found those men, whether many or few, in whom at that time centred for the English-speaking race the possibility of any further progress in human society; the men who not only dared to have ideas, but dared to put them together and to face the logical results of them; who regarded their own souls, and truth, more than they did gold, or respectability, or bodily comfort, or life; who had a high and stout confidence that as God in wisdom had made the world, so man by increasing in wisdom might improve his own condition in the world; and who proposed then and there, if possible, to bring all things in religion and in politics to some genuine test, in which nothing foolish should be retained because it was old, and nothing wise rejected because it was new. At no other time, probably, has there been in England a greater activity of brain directed toward researches into the very roots of things, than there was during that time; and never in England has the class of persons just described been larger in numbers, wider in the range of its individual peculiarities, more heterogeneous, more resolute, or more hopeful.

It was principally out of this second class, this vast, loosely connected, and deeply excited class of Englishmen in the seventeenth century—the Englishmen who were not sluggish, were not living for physical comfort, were not ruled by animal instincts, were not tied to precedents, were not afraid of ideas—that the twenty-one thousand

people came who between 1620 and 1640 populated New England. Primarily, then, these first New-Englanders were thinkers in some fashion; they assumed the right to think, the utility of thinking, and the duty of standing by the fair conclusions of their thinking, even at very considerable cost. Of course among them were representatives of all degrees of intellectual radicalism, from the wealthy, reputable, and moderate non-conformists of Massachusetts Bay, down to the lowly and discreet separatists of Plymouth, and still further down to that inspired concourse of crotchety and pure-hearted enthusiasts, the Anabaptists, Antinomians, Quakers, Ranters, and Seekers, who found their first earthly paradise in Rhode Island. But the one grand distinction between the English colonists in New England and nearly all other English colonists in America was this, that while the latter came here chiefly for some material benefit, the former came chiefly for an ideal benefit. In its inception New England was not an agricultural community, nor a manufacturing community, nor a trading community: it was a thinking community; an arena and mart for ideas; its characteristic organ being not the hand, nor the heart, nor the pocket, but the brain.

III.

The proportion of learned men among them in those early days was extraordinary. It is probable that between the years 1630 and 1690 there were in New England as many graduates of Cambridge and Oxford as could be found in any population of similar size in the mother-country. At one time, during the first part of that period, there was in Massachusetts and Connecticut a Cambridge graduate for every two hundred and fifty inhabitants, besides sons of Oxford not a few.[1] Among the clergy in particular were some men of a scholarship accounted great

[1] James Savage, in Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 173, 318.

even by the heroic standard of the seventeenth century, —John Cotton, John Davenport, Richard Mather, Eliot, Norton, Hooker, Roger Williams, Stone, Bulkley, Nathaniel Ward, Thomas Shepard, Dunster, Chauncey; while the laity had among them several men of no inconsiderable learning,—the elder and the younger Winthrop, Thomas Dudley, Simon Bradstreet, William Brewster, William Bradford, Pynchon, Daniel Gookin, John Haynes. Probably no other community of pioneers ever so honored study, so reverenced the symbols and instruments of learning. Theirs was a social structure with its corner-stone resting on a book. Universal education seemed to them to be a universal necessity; and they promptly provided for it in all its grades. By the year 1649 every colony in New England, except Rhode Island, had made public instruction compulsory; requiring that in each town of fifty householders there should be a school for reading and writing, and in each town of a hundred householders, a grammar school with a teacher competent "to fit youths for the University;" and they did this, as their old law frankly stated it, in order that "learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers,"[1] and especially in order to baffle "that old deluder Sathan," "one chief project" of whose dark ambition it is "to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures" by persuading them "from the use of tongues."[2] Only six years after John Winthrop's arrival in Salem harbor the people of Massachusetts took from their own treasury the funds with which to found a university; so that while the tree-stumps were as yet scarcely weather-browned in their earliest harvest-fields, and before the nightly howl of the wolf had ceased from the outskirts of their villages, they had made arrangements by which even in that wilderness their young men could at once enter upon the study of Aristotle and Thucydides, of Horace and Tacitus, and the Hebrew Bible.

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[1] Hildreth, "Hist. U.S." I. 370, 371. [2] Ibid.

Sixty-three years later, a representative of the king of England, the Earl of Bellomont, congratulated the people of New England on this superb achievement, by which, as he said, their "youth were not put to travel for learning, but had the Muses at their doors." The learned class were indeed an order of nobility among them. "Child," said a high-spirited New England matron to her little boy, "if God make thee a good Christian and a good scholar, thou hast all that thy mother ever asked for thee." The praise of studiousness was a eulogium warm enough even for the rhetoric of an epitaph. "The ashes of an hard student, a good scholar, and a great Christian:" this was the inscription consecrating the tomb-stone of a young preacher snatched away to another and a better world, at the age of nineteen. The life of a learned man, as it seemed to them to be full of human distinction, so they thought it full of human beneficence; and the fantastic biographer of many of those early scholars has described one of them as "a tree of knowledge, but so laden with fruit that he stooped for the very children to pick off the apples ready to drop into their mouths."[1] A book of learning was a treasure almost rising to the dignity of real estate. In 1649 a sturdy merchant of Boston conveyed to Harvard College a copy of Stephens's "Thesaurus," but upon the written condition that the book should be returned to him should he ever have a child studious of Greek and desirous of that book. He subsequently had such a child, and actually got back his book.[2]

IV.

Closely connected with this great trait of intellectuality in them was their earnestness, which, indeed, seems to have been not so much a separate trait of character, as an

[1] C. Mather, "Magnalia," I. 411.

[2] Josiah Quincy, "Hist. Harv. Univ." I. 512, note.

all-pervading moral atmosphere, in which every function of their natures breathed and wrought. This intensity of theirs went with them into everything—piety, politics, education, work, play. It was an earnestness that could well be called terrible. It lifted them above human weakness; it made them victorious and sad. They were not acquainted with indolence; they forgot fatigue; they were stopped by no difficulties; they knew that they could do all things that could be done. Life to them was a serious business—they meant to attend to it; a grim battle—they resolved not to lose it; a sacred opportunity—they hoped not to throw it away:

> "All is, if I have grace to use it so,
> As ever in my great Task-Master's eye."

Above all, it was toward religion, as the one supreme thing in life and in the universe, that all this intellectuality of theirs and all this earnestness, were directed. The result was tremendous. Perhaps not since the time of the apostles had there been in the world a faith so literal, a zeal so passionate: not even in the time of the apostles was there connected with these an intelligence so keen and so robust. For the first time, it may be, in the history of the world, these people brought together the subtle brain of the metaphysician and the glowing heart of the fanatic; and they flung both vehemently into the service of religion. Never were men more logical or self-consistent, in theory and in practice. Religion, they said, was the chief thing; they meant it; they acted upon it. They did not attempt to combine the sacred and the secular; they simply abolished the secular, and left only the sacred. The state became the church; the king, a priest; politics, a department of theology; citizenship, the privilege of those only who had received baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The literalness and the logic, which they applied to everything, they applied particularly to the doctrines of

providence and of prayer. They believed that God was always near at hand, and more than willing to interpose in their smallest affairs. Those Biblical texts about the divine observation of the sparrow that falls to the ground, and of the number of the hairs growing on our heads, they took exactly as the words stood. A certain man named Anthony Thacher, being shipwrecked along the coast, was thrown upon a rock. "As I was sliding off the rock into the sea," he says, "the Lord directed my toes into a joint in the rock's side, as also the tops of some of my fingers, . . . by means whereof, the wave leaving me, I remained so, hanging on the rock, only my head above the water."[1] Holding this faith, they looked for a precise providential meaning in every small incident in their lives; and it was the mark of a holy and a wise man to be able to solve the various pantomimic riddles with which God was all the time trying to communicate his thoughts to them. Thus, in the village of Watertown there occurred one day in the view of many witnesses, "a great combat between a mouse and a snake; and after a long fight the mouse prevailed, and killed the snake. The pastor of Boston, Mr. Wilson, a very sincere, holy man, hearing of it, gave this interpretation: that the snake was the devil; the mouse was a poor contemptible people which God had brought hither, which should overcome Satan here, and dispossess him of his kingdom."[2] About 1640, John Winthrop, the younger, had in a chamber a large number of books; and, as his father relates, among them was "one wherein the Greek Testament, the Psalms, and the Common Prayer were bound together. He found the Common Prayer eaten with mice, every leaf of it, and not any of the two other touched, nor any other of his books, though there were above a thousand."[3] This extraordinary proceeding on the part of the mice in singling out the Prayer-Book

[1] Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 490. [2] J. Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 97.
[3] Ibid. II. 24.

for destruction was indeed an ominous fact. The venerable historian has forborne to intrude upon us his own interpretation of it; yet his manner of telling the story intimates that in his own mind there was not much doubt that the ravages of those little animals upon the Episcopal Prayer-Book were expressly directed by the Almighty, and contained a strong hint of the divine disapprobation of the very objectionable book that was devoured by them.[1] With this belief in minute providential interventions there was united a corresponding conception of prayer. To them prayer was something more than a devout soliloquy, or an exercise in spiritual gymnastics valuable only for its reactionary effects. When they prayed they thought that they moved the hand that moved the world. They spoke of direct answers to prayer as one of the common and indubitable facts of almost daily experience. Thus, one season, their crops were imperilled by caterpillars. What was to be done? The people got together in their churches and asked the Lord to drive off the caterpillars: "and presently after," says the old historian, "the caterpillars vanished away."[2] Once, being at sea along that coast, some of them were "carried by a violent storm among the rocks, where they could find no place to get out. So they went to prayer; and presently there came a great sea and heaved their vessel over into the open sea, in a place between two rocks."[3] At another time, when they had to go upon a dangerous and momentous military expedition, they who went and they who stayed at home "kept the wheel of prayer in a continual

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[1] A modern and a very learned commentator upon this passage in Winthrop has ingeniously suggested that the conduct of the mice is susceptible of another interpretation, and one quite inoffensive to the Church that still cherishes the Prayer-Book; namely, that "the mice, not liking psalmody, and not understanding Greek, took their food from another part of the volume." James Savage, ibid.

[2] J. Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." II. 327. [3] Ibid. 411.

motion,"[1]—not without some effect, they believed, upon the results of the expedition. One of the celebrated pastors of Cambridge relates this incident of his life as a student:—"When I could not take notes of the sermon, . . . I was troubled at it, and prayed the Lord earnestly that he would help me to note sermons; and . . . as soon as ever I had prayed . . . him for it, I presently the next Sabbath was able to take notes, who the precedent Sabbath could do nothing at all that way."[2] On one occasion a certain Mr. Adams being on a journey with the saintly Boston minister, John Wilson, received tidings of the dangerous illness of his daughter. "Mr. Wilson, looking up to heaven, began mightily to wrestle with God for the life of the young woman: . . . then turning himself about unto Mr. Adams, 'Brother,' said he, 'I trust your daughter shall live; I believe in God she shall recover of this sickness.' And so it marvellously came to pass, and she is now the fruitful mother of several desirable children."[3]

So intense a light could but cast some deep shadows: suppressing sweetness and gaiety in the human heart; stiffening conscientiousness into scrupulosity, rectitude into asceticism; making punishment a species of retributive vengeance; so stimulating zeal for their own creed that this zeal should become intolerance and even violence toward those who held a creed that was different. At Plymouth a maid-servant of Samuel Gorton "was threatened with banishment from the colony as a common vagabond." Her crime was that she had smiled in church. We read of a truly excellent minister, one Thomas Parker, who, hearing some young persons laughing very freely in a room below, came down from his chamber and thus smote them with his sanctity: "Cousins, I wonder you can

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[1] C. Mather, "Magnalia," I. 192.

[2] Thomas Shepard, Autobiography, in Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 502, 503.

[3] "Magnalia," I. 314.

be so merry, unless you are sure of your salvation."[1] The wife of one minister, being rich in her own right, had somewhat costlier apparel than ministers' wives were wont to have; and several unenvious dames in the parish expressed deep horror at her carnal-mindedness in wearing whalebone in the bodice and sleeves of her gown, corked shoes, and other like things. One aged and feminine saint, likewise, was painfully affected because a certain "godly man" had his band "something stiffened with starch."[2] The taking of the creature called tobacco seemed to many to be a heinous sin. In their legislatures they passed laws against it; in their discourses they compared the smoke of it to the smoke ascending from the bottomless pit. In common with their brethren in England they suffered great distress of mind over the abomination of long hair. Grave divines thundered against it in their anniversary sermons; and potent statesmen solemnly put their own cropped heads together in order to devise some scheme for compelling all other heads to be as well shorn as theirs were. In 1649 John Endicott became by renewed election governor of Massachusetts Bay; and one of the first acts of his administration for that year was "to institute a solemn association against long hair."[3] A distinguished divine, about the year 1660, in a writing composed in his old age, poured out an indignant wail over the degeneracy of the times: "I do also protest against all the evil fashions and devices of this age, both in apparel and that general disguisement of long, ruffianlike hair, a custom most generally taken up at that time when the grave and modest wearing of hair was a part of the reproach of Christ."[4] President Chauncey raised his eloquent voice against the capillary enormity. The apostle Eliot, a most saintly, wise, and

[1] "Magnalia," I. 487.

[2] These two incidents occurred among the brethren in England and Holland, as related by Bradford. Young, "Chron. Pilgrims," 446, 447.

[3] Morton, "N. E. Memorial," 316, note by Davis.

[4] In Quincy, "Hist. Harv. Univ." I. 426.

sweet spirit, spoke out his deep grief against the thing, believing that it was indeed a "luxurious feminine prolixity for men to wear their hair long," and that it was peculiarly shameful for ministers to "ruffle their heads in excesses of this kind." Eliot became a very old man; and it was his sorrow to live long enough to see devout deacons with their hair unclipped, and even reputable ministers of the gospel embellished with the wicked device of periwigs; and at last his opposition died away in this sigh of despair—"the lust is insuperable."[1]

Their scheme of legal punishments was a product of theology rather than of jurisprudence. They measured out penalties according to the moral and ecclesiastical odiousness of each crime, not according to its evil effects upon society. Toward the criminal the judges stood not alone as civil magistrates, punishing him in order to prevent others from becoming like him, but as ministers of divine wrath giving the wretch in this world a foretaste of the pains of hell. Thus blasphemy was to be punished with death; likewise the cursing of parents by any one above sixteen years of age. Sabbath-breaking, neglect of public worship, and idleness were grave offences. "Common fowlers, tobacco-takers, and all other persons who could give no good account of how they spent their time," were to be put into jail.[2] In their penal methods there was great versatility, and a logical fitness almost picturesque. We read that one man was ordered to carry turfs to the fort for being drunk; that another, for being guilty of "a light carriage," was admonished to take heed; that another was severely whipped and kept in hold for suspicion of slander, idleness, and stubbornness; that John Wedgewood was to be set in the stocks for being in the company of drunkards; that Robert Shorthose, for swearing by the blood of God, was to have his tongue put into a cleft stick and to stand

[1] 1 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. VIII. 27.

[2] Hutchinson, "Hist. Mass. Bay," I. 443.

so for the space of half an hour; that a servant, for making a fraudulent bargain with a child, had to stand for two hours with his hands tied up to a bar, and a basket of stones hanged about his neck; that a certain woman, for reproaching the magistrates, was sentenced to be whipped, and that "she stood without tying and bare her punishment with a masculine spirit, glorying in her suffering;"[1] that this same heroic dame, eight years afterward, "had a cleft stick put on her tongue half an hour, for reproaching the elders;"[2] that a man named Fairfield, for an atrocious act of shame, was sentenced to pay a fine of forty pounds, to be severely whipped at Boston, to be severely whipped again at Salem, then to return to Boston and have one nostril slit and seared, next to go back to Salem and have the other nostril slit and seared, then to be kept on Boston Neck so long as he lived, to wear a halter visibly about his throat during the remainder of his life, to be whipped if he should appear abroad without it, and to die if he repeated the original offence.

One other personal trait remains to be spoken of: these people inevitably were persecutors. They lived at a time when not many human beings in all the world had taken in the idea that an error in religious opinion may not be a crime; they believed with all their might that the religious opinions which they held were the true ones, and that having come out to the ends of the earth to found there for the glory of God a pure religious commonwealth, it would be impious as well as treasonable for them to tolerate among them the presence of any disbeliever. Among people of religious earnestness on both sides of the Atlantic, the word toleration was then a profligate and a scandalous word. "Toleration," said a leading member of the Westminster Assembly, "is so prodigious an impiety that this religious parliament cannot but abhor the

[1] J. Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 340.
[2] Ibid.

meaning of it."[1] What more natural than that Thomas Dudley of Massachusetts, if he should write verses at all, should write these verses:

> "Let men of God in courts and churches watch
> O'er such as do a toleration hatch."[2]

A saying was then current in New England, that "Antichrist was coming in at the backdoor by a general liberty of conscience."[3] "It is Satan's policy," said Thomas Shepard, "to plead for an indefinite and boundless toleration."[4] "Every toleration of false religions or opinions," said Nathaniel Ward, "hath as many errors and sins in it as all the false religions and opinions it tolerates."[5] Finally, John Norton, with the devout frankness of a Spanish inquisitor, declared that for the putting down of error, "the holy tactics of the civil sword should be employed."[6] All this was their sincere belief; and they were men who had the habit of standing by their sincere beliefs with a dreadful fidelity. One example will be enough. In 1644, the Baptist Church at Newport, Rhode Island, appointed three of its prominent members, John Clarke, John Crandall, and Obadiah Holmes, to pay a visit of Christian sympathy to an aged member of their church, named William Witter, who lived near Lynn, Massachusetts, and who had sent to them a request for such a visit. The delegates reached Lynn on Saturday; and on Sunday, for the comfort of their aged brother, they began to hold a religious service at his house, which stood about two miles from the town. They were in the midst of this service, when, as John Clarke writes, "two constables entered, who by their clamorous tongues made an interruption in my discourse, and more uncivilly disturbed us than the pursui-

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[1] Narr. Club Pub. III. Pref. xiii.
[2] "Magnalia," I. 134.
[3] J. Chaplin, "Life of Henry Dunster," 186.
[4] Ibid. 185.
[5] "Simple Cobbler of Agawam," 8.
[6] J. Chaplin, "Life of Henry Dunster," 184. See also Longfellow's delineation of Norton, in "Tragedy of John Endicott," 13, 79.

vants of the old English bishops were wont to do." The three visitors were then rudely carried off by the constables, who exhibited a written warrant for the arrest; the next day they were taken to Boston and thrown into jail. Upon their trial before the Court of Assistants, Clarke pleaded the cause of himself and his associates; whereupon the governor, John Endicott, "stepped up and told us we had denied infant baptism, and, being somewhat transported, told me I had deserved death, and said he would not have such trash brought into their jurisdiction." The prisoners were sentenced to pay heavy fines, and in default of payment to be whipped. Clarke's fine was paid for him without his knowledge; Crandall was released after a time upon condition; and Holmes, after lying in jail until the autumn, was taken out on occasion of the weekly religious lecture and publicly whipped in so barbarous a manner that "for a considerable time he could take no rest, except by supporting himself on his knees and elbows."[1]

Such, both on the bright and on the dark side, were the people who founded New England in the seventeenth century, and who helped, more than all other persons, to found American literature. Doubtless we shall be ready to say with Nathaniel Hawthorne: "Let us thank God for having given us such ancestors; and let each successive generation thank him not less fervently for being one step further from them in the march of ages."[2]

V.

The outward arrangements which they had constructed for themselves—the visible framework of their lives in

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[1] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 210–211, note, where full references are given to the original authorities for the above account. For the ablest modern extenuation of the conduct of these persecutors, see "As to Roger Williams," 119–122, by Henry Martyn Dexter.

[2] "The Snow Image, and Other Twice-Told Tales," 85.

home and shop and field and court and school and church —were the authentic expression of their characters, and fitted them as the garment does the man who wears it: closely related communities; local self-government; only members of the church allowed any voice in the state; every man a soldier; every man a scholar; constant friction of mind with mind; not labor but idleness deemed a disgrace; and all this upon a hard soil and under a fierce sky. They were men who carried keen brains and despotic consciences throbbing in bodies toughened by toil; and what they worked out in the development of human nature and of human society, neither America nor the world can yet dispense with. At once a grim happiness began to sprout up out of the sturdy freedom and thrift which they made for themselves here. "We are all freeholders," was the proud message sent back to England by one of these early settlers; "the rent-day doth not trouble us; and all those good blessings we have, . . . in their seasons, for taking."[1] Many elements of civic felicity were soon there; and with time whatever elements were discordant with these, were sure to be sloughed off. One of the descendants of these first New-Englanders, a great statesman of the eighteenth century, being told by a Virginian that he wished that his own commonwealth were like New England, offered him "a receipt for making a New England in Virginia:" it consisted of four ingredients, "town-meetings, training-days, town-schools, and ministers."[2]

Did the people of New England in their earliest age begin to produce a literature? Who can doubt it? With their incessant activity of brain, with so much both of common and of uncommon culture among them, with intellectual interests so lofty and strong, with so many outward occasions to stir their deepest passions into the same great currents, it would be hard to explain it had they indeed produced no literature. Moreover, contrary to what

[1] Young, "Chron. Pil." 250.

[2] Works of John Adams, III. 400.

is commonly asserted of them, they were not without a literary class. In as large a proportion to the whole population as was then the case in the mother-country, there were in New England many men trained to the use of books, accustomed to express themselves fluently by voice and pen, and not so immersed in the physical tasks of life as to be deprived of the leisure for whatever writing they were prompted to undertake. It was a literary class made up of men of affairs, country-gentlemen, teachers, above all of clergymen; men of letters who did not depend upon letters for their bread, and who thus did their work under conditions of intellectual independence. Nor is it true that all the environments of their lives were unfriendly to literary action; indeed for a certain class of minds those environments were extremely wholesome and stimulating. There were about them many of the tokens and forces of a picturesque, romantic, and impressive life: the infinite solitudes of the wilderness, its mystery, its peace; the near presence of nature, vast, potent, unassailed; the strange problems presented to them by savage character and savage life; their own escape from great cities, from crowds, from mean competitions; the luxury of having room enough; the delight of being free; the urgent interest of all the Protestant world in their undertaking; the hopes of humanity already looking thither; the coming to them of scholars, saints, statesmen, philosophers. Many of these factors in the early colonial times are such as cannot be reached by statistics, and are apt to be lost by those who merely grope on the surface of history. If our antiquarians have generally missed this view, it may reassure us to know that our greatest literary artists have not failed to see it. "New England," as Hawthorne believed, "was then in a state incomparably more picturesque than at present, or than it has been within the memory of man."[1] That, indeed, was the beginning of

[1] "The Snow Image," etc. 161.

"the old colonial day" which Longfellow has pictured to us,

> "When men lived in a grander way,
> With ampler hospitality."

For the study of literature, they turned with eagerness to the ancient classics; read them freely; quoted them with apt facility. Though their new home was but a province, their minds were not provincial: they had so stalwart and chaste a faith in the ideas which brought them to America as to think that wherever those ideas were put into practice, there was the metropolis. In the public expression of thought they limited themselves by restraints which, though then prevalent in all parts of the civilized world, now seem shameful and intolerable: the printing-press in New England during the seventeenth century was in chains. The first instrument of the craft and mystery of printing was set up at Cambridge in 1639, under the auspices of Harvard College; and for the subsequent twenty-three years the president of that College was in effect responsible for the good behavior of the terrible machine. His control of it did not prove sufficiently vigilant. The fears of the clergy were excited by the lenity that had permitted the escape into the world of certain books which tended "to open the door of heresy;"[1] therefore, in 1662 two official licensers were appointed, without whose consent nothing was to be printed. Even this did not make the world seem safe; and two years afterward the law was made more stringent. Other licensers were appointed; excepting the one at Cambridge no printing-press was to be allowed in the colony; and if from the printing-press that was allowed, anything should be printed without the permission of the licensers, the peccant engine was to be forfeited to the government and the printer himself was to be forbidden the exercise of his profession "within

[1] Isaiah Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." I. 58.

this jurisdiction for the time to come." But even the new licensers were not severe enough. In 1667, having learned that these officers had given their consent to the publication of "The Imitation of Christ," a book written "by a popish minister, wherein is contained some things that are less safe to be infused amongst the people of this place," the authorities directed that the book should be returned to the licensers for "a more full revisal," and that in the meantime the printing-press should stand still. In the leading colony of New England legal restraints upon printing were not entirely removed until about twenty-one years before the Declaration of Independence.[1]

The chief literary disadvantages of New England were, that her writers lived far from the great repositories of books, and far from the central currents of the world's best thinking; that the lines of their own literary activity were few; and that, though they nourished their minds upon the Hebrew Scriptures and upon the classics of the Roman and Greek literatures, they stood aloof, with a sort of horror, from the richest and most exhilarating types of classic writing in their own tongue. In many ways their literary development was stunted and stiffened by the narrowness of Puritanism. Nevertheless, what they lacked in symmetry of culture and in range of literary movement, was something which the very integrity of their natures was sure to compel them, either in themselves or in their posterity, to acquire. For the people of New England it must be said that in stock, spiritual and physical, they were well started; and that of such a race, under such opportunities, almost anything great and bright may be predicted. Within their souls at that time the æsthetic sense was crushed down and almost trampled out by the fell tyranny of their creed. But the æsthetic sense was still within them; and in pure and wholesome natures such as

[1] Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." I. 16, 58, 59.

theirs, its emergence was only a matter of normal growth. They who have their eyes fixed in adoration upon the beauty of holiness, are not far from the sight of all beauty. It is not permitted to us to doubt that in music, in painting, architecture, sculpture, poetry, prose, the highest art will be reached, in some epoch of its growth, by the robust and versatile race sprung from those practical idealists of the seventeenth century—those impassioned seekers after the invisible truth and beauty and goodness. Even in their times, as we shall presently see, some sparkles and prophecies of the destined splendor could not help breaking forth.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW ENGLAND: HISTORICAL WRITERS.

I.—Early development of the historic consciousness in New England.

II.—William Bradford—His career in England, Holland, and America—His History of Plymouth—Singular fate of the manuscript—His fitness for historical writing—Outline of the work—Condition and feelings of the Pilgrims when first ashore at Plymouth—Portrait of a clerical mountebank—The skins needed by the founders of colonies—Unfamiliar personal aspects of the Pilgrims—Their predominant nobility—Summary of this historian's traits.

III.—Nathaniel Morton—His life—His "Memorial," and how he made it—Lack of originality in it and in him.

IV.—The sailing of the Winthrop fleet—John Winthrop himself—His "Model of Christian Charity"—His "History of New England"—An historical diary—Its minute fidelity and graphic power—Examples—His famous speech.

V.—Edward Johnson—His "Wonder-Working Providence"—How he came to write it—Reflects the greatness and pettiness of the New England Puritans—Examples—Its literary peculiarities.

VI.—The literature of the Pequot War—John Mason its hero and historian—His book—His story of the Mystic fight.

VII.—The high worth of Daniel Gookin—An American sage, patriot, and philanthropist—The trials and triumphs of his life—His two historical works relating to the Indians.

I.

We now enter upon the study of the earliest contributions made to American literature by New England. We begin with its historical writings—historical writings relating to New England, and produced in New England, in its very first century, nay, in its very first generation. Of course history, as signifying the act by which the present reviews the past and utters a passionless, wise, and final verdict upon it, New England had not and could not have,

either in its first generation or in its first century. But this it had, an historical consciousness; a belief, born with itself, in the large human significance of its great task of founding a new order of things in America; an assurance that what it was then doing the future would desire to know about, and therefore that for the benefit of the future the present should keep a record of itself. The history that the earliest men of New England wrote was what we may call contemporaneous history; it was historical diarizing; it was the registration of events as they went by, or as they yet lived in the memories of the living. Here, indeed, are extraordinary facts,—the early development of the historical consciousness in New England, the large number of historical writers that it produced in its primal age, the amount and the quality of the work that these writers did. We find in our first literary period no less than six writers who deserve mention as historians; and it is through a study of what they wrote that we can best make our way into the very heart of the intellectual life of the period, and qualify ourselves to judge of all its literary memorials.

II.

William Bradford, of the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock, deserves the pre-eminence of being called the father of American history. We pay to him also that homage which we render to those authors who even by their writings give to us the impression that, admirable as they may be in authorship, behind their authorship is something still more admirable—their own manliness. He was born in Austerfield, Yorkshire, in 1588; at the age of seventeen he became a zealous member of the little company of separatists who, under the ministry of the saintly John Robinson, fled from England into Holland; at the age of thirty-two he appeared as a prominent man among that portion of John Robinson's flock who landed in New England in 1620; and from 1621 until his death in 1657 he was annually

chosen governor of the colony, excepting on five occasions when "by importunity he got off." After he had been in America ten years and had seen proof of the permanent success of the heroic movement in which he was a leader, his mind seems to have been possessed by the historic significance of that movement; and thenceforward for twenty years he gave his leisure to the composition of a work in which the story of the settlement of New England should be told in a calm, just, and authentic manner. The result was his "History of Plymouth Plantation,"—a book which has had an extraordinary fate. It was left by its author in manuscript. After his death, it came into the hands of his nephew, Nathaniel Morton, by whom it was profusely used in the composition of his famous "New England's Memorial," published in 1669. Afterward, the manuscript belonged to Thomas Prince, who drew from it what he desired when writing his "Chronological History of New England." By Prince the old book was left at his death in his library in the tower of old South Church, Boston, where it was used by Thomas Hutchinson when engaged on his "History of Massachusetts Bay." During the occupation of Boston by the British troops in 1775 and 1776, Prince's library was plundered, and many precious historical documents were destroyed. Bradford's manuscript was known to have been in that library not long before; and as afterward it did not appear among the remains of the library, it was given up for lost, and was mourned over by American scholars for nearly a hundred years. In 1855, however, the long-lost treasure was discovered in England, in the Fulham library, the ancient and rich collection belonging to the Bishop of London. It was thereupon at once copied, and published in this country;[1] and by American historical students it was welcomed back into life with a sort of jubilant all-hail.

There is no other document upon New England history

[1] In 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. III.

that can take precedence of this either in time or in authority. Governor Bradford wrote of events that had passed under his own eye, and that had been shaped by his own hand; and he had every qualification of a trustworthy narrator. His mind was placid, grave, well-poised; he was a student of many books and of many languages;[1] and being thus developed both by letters and by experience, he was able to tell well the truth of history as it had unfolded itself during his own strenuous and benignant career. His history is an orderly, lucid, and most instructive work; it contains many tokens of its author's appreciation of the nature and requirements of historical writing; and though so recently published in a perfect form, it must henceforward take its true place at the head of American historical literature, and win for its author the patristic dignity that we have ascribed to him.

The philosophical thoroughness of his plan is indicated at the very beginning of his book. In relating the history of Plymouth plantation he undertakes to go back to "the very root and rise of the same," and to show its "occasion and inducements;" and he avows his purpose to write "in a plain style, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things." This plan of course conducts him into an account of the origin of religious dissent in England, and of the lamentable blunders of English churchmen and statesmen in their attempts to beat back that dissent into submission and to throttle its free voice. There is a charm in the simple English and in the quiet pathos of his words as he depicts the sufferings of these persecuted ones, particularly of the little congregation at Scrooby, with which the author himself was identified: "But after these things

[1] Besides his own language he knew Dutch, French, Latin, and Greek; and in his old age he was a diligent student of Hebrew. "Though I am grown aged, yet I have had a longing to see with mine own eyes something of that most ancient language and holy tongue, in which the law and oracles of God were writ, and in which God and angels spake to the holy patriarchs of old time." Bradford's "Dialogue," ed. by Charles Deane, Pref. viii.

they could not longer continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as flea-bitings in comparison of these which now came upon them. For some were taken and clapped up in prison; others had their houses beset and watched night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to fly and leave their houses and habitations and the means of their livelihood. Yet these and many other sharper things which afterward befel them, were no other than they looked for, and therefore were the better prepared to bear them by the assistance of God's grace and spirit. Yet seeing themselves thus molested, and that there was no hope of their continuance there, by a joint consent they resolved to go into the Low-Countries, where they heard was freedom of religion for all men."[1] He then proceeds to tell "of their departure into Holland and their troubles thereabout, with some of the many difficulties they found and met withal;"[2] "of their manner of living and entertainment there;"[3] of "the reasons and causes of their removal"[4] across "the vast and furious ocean." "The place they had thoughts on was some of those vast and unpeopled countries of America, which are fruitful and fit for habitation, being devoid of all civil inhabitants, where there are only salvage and brutish men which range up and down, little otherwise than the wild beasts of the same."[5] There is something very impressive in the quiet, sage words in which he pictures the conflicts of opinion among the Pilgrims over this question of their removal to America, their clear, straight view of the perils and pains which it would involve, and finally the considerations that moved them, in spite of all the tremendous difficulties they foresaw, to make their immortal attempt. No modern description of these modest and unconquerable

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[1] "Hist. Plym. Plantation," 10. [2] Ibid. 11.
[3] Ibid. 16. [4] Ibid. 22. [5] Ibid. 24–25.

heroes can equal the impression made upon us by the reserve and the moral sublimity of the historian's words: "It was answered that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and must be both enterprised and overcome with answerable courages. It was granted the dangers were great, but not desperate; the difficulties were many, but not invincible. For though there were many of them likely, yet they were not certain; it might be sundry of the things feared might never befall; others by provident care and the use of good means might in a great measure be prevented; and all of them, through the help of God, by fortitude and patience, might either be borne or overcome. True it was that such attempts were not to be made and undertaken without good ground and reason; not rashly or lightly as many have done for curiosity or hope of gain, and so forth. But their condition was not ordinary; their ends were good and honorable; their calling lawful and urgent; and therefore they might expect the blessing of God in their proceeding. Yea, though they should lose their lives in this action, yet might they have comfort in the same, and their endeavors would be honorable."[1] A minute account is then given of their negotiations in England and in Holland for permission to settle in America; of their difficulties about money, ships, food, destination; and finally of their departure from Holland, their delays, toils, and risks, in getting free of the English coast, their long voyage over the sea, their groping and dubious approach to Plymouth harbor, and their final debarkation there. The language in which the historian describes their condition and their emotion on reaching shore is a noble specimen of simple, picturesque, and pathetic eloquence, and deserves an honorable place in the record of contemporaneous English style: "Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the

[1] "Hist. Plym. Plantation," 26.

God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. And no marvel if they were thus joyful, seeing wise Seneca was so affected with sailing a few miles on the coast of his own Italy, as he affirmed, that he had rather remain twenty years on his way by land, than pass by sea to any place in a short time; so tedious and dreadful was the same unto him. But here I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor people's present condition; and so I think will the reader too when he well considers the same. Being thus passed the vast ocean and a sea of troubles before, in their preparation, . . . they had now no friends to welcome them, nor inns to entertain or refresh their weather-beaten bodies, no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor. It is recorded in Scripture as a mercy to the apostle and his shipwrecked company, that the barbarians shewed them no small kindness in refreshing them; but these savage barbarians when they met with them . . . were readier to fill their sides full of arrows than otherwise. And for the season, it was winter; and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? And what multitudes there might be of them, they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah, to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face; and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue. If they

looked behind them, there was the mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a main bar and gulf to separate them from all the civil parts of the world. . . . What could now sustain them but the spirit of God and his grace? May not, and ought not, the children of these fathers rightly say: 'Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord and he heard their voice and looked on their adversity. . . . When they wandered in the desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord his loving-kindness, and his wonderful works before the sons of men.'"[1]

As the history proceeds year by year, few things are omitted that a noble curiosity could desire to look into, the bright and the sombre side of that primal life,—its inadequate shelter, its sickness, its weariness, its long pressure upon the verge of famine and assassination, its roughness, its grim toils, its ignoble wranglings and meannesses, its incongruous outbreaks of crime, its steady persistent ascent into prosperity through sagacious enterprise, hard work, and indomitable faith, its piety, its military exploits, its philanthropy, its acute diplomacy, its far-eyed statesmanship. As the book is composed in the form of annual records of experience, it has the privilege of stopping where it will without violating its own unity. The historian's hand kept moving upon this task for twenty years; and when at last old age and public cares rested too heavy upon it, the work, brought down to 1646, was finished so far as it went. Break off when it would, that work could not be a fragment.

The prevailing trait of its pages is of course grave; but at times this sedateness is relieved by a quaint and pithy emphasis of phrase that amounts almost to humor. But

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[1] "Hist. Plym. Plantation," 78–80.

a writer like Bradford is more likely to condescend to a solemn sort of sarcasm than to humor; as, for instance, in his dealing with John Lyford, the mischievous clerical impostor who in 1624 found his way to Plymouth, and vexed the souls of the Pilgrims by the antics of his sly, sensual, and malignant life. Some lines in Bradford's sketch of this fawning swindler remind one of the more elaborate work of a mighty painter of human character in our own time, having particularly an amusing resemblance to that great artist's portrait of Uriah Heep. The historian ushers Lyford upon the stage under the ironical title of an "eminent person," and adds that when he "first came ashore, he saluted them with that reverence and humility as is seldom to be seen, and indeed made them ashamed, he so bowed and cringed unto them, and would have kissed their hands if they would have suffered him; yea, he wept and shed many tears, blessing God that had brought him to see their faces; and admiring the things they had done in their wants, and so forth, as if he had been made all of love, and the humblest person in the world."[1] In the early and doubtful days of the Plymouth colony, the true men were troubled by the querulous and paltry complaints which by some of the weaker brethren were sent back or carried back to England, and which had the effect of discouraging the flow of emigration thither. Many of these complaints seemed to a man like Bradford to be too despicable for serious notice, as this, "that the people are much annoyed with mosquitoes." His contemptuous answer was: "They are too delicate, and unfit to begin new plantations and colonies, that cannot endure the biting of a mosquito. We would wish such to keep at home till at least they be mosquito-proof."[2]

This old document brings into view some aspects of character now not commonly presented as belonging to those august personages whom we reverently name the

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[1] "Hist. Plym. Plantation," 171. [2] Ibid. 163.

Pilgrim Fathers. Through the thick haze of oratorical compliment that has so long enveloped their persons, we perhaps fail to see the literal and prosaic truth concerning them. They were not all of the saintly and heroic type, bearing every burden with speechless and devout endurance. Even while their feet had but just touched the sacred granite of Plymouth Rock, "discontents and murmurings" arose among some, and "mutinous speeches and carriages" among others.[1] Even some of the best of them, perhaps, would have seemed to us rather pragmatical and disputatious persons, with all the edges and corners of their characters left sharp, with all their opinions very definitely formed, and with their habits of frank utterance quite thoroughly matured. Certainly, in these pages, they do not seem to have been a company of gentle, dreamy, and euphemistical saints, with a particular aptitude for martyrdom, and an inordinate development of affability. The world, it appears, is indebted for much of its progress to uncomfortable and even grumpy people; and the Pilgrim Fathers had so implacable a desire to have things quite right according to their own austere standard, that even on the brink of any momentous enterprise, they would stop and argue the case, if a suspicion occurred to them that things were not quite right. This exacting and tenacious propensity of theirs was not a little criticised by some who had business connections with them. Thomas Weston of London, in his disgust at the first return of the Mayflower from Plymouth without any lading, told them by letter that "a quarter of the time" they "spent in discoursing, arguing, and consulting" would have enabled them to make a better showing of the commercial success of their expedition. The impetuous and noble-hearted Robert Cushman, with his practical eye, and his keen zest for unhindered action, complained of the interminable disputations of the Pilgrims when hovering

[1] "Hist. Plym. Plantation," 90-91.

upon the English coast preparatory to their famous ocean voyage: "We that should be partners of humility and peace shall be examples of jangling and insulting;" "there is fallen already amongst us a flat schism; and we are readier to go to dispute, than to set forward a voyage."[1]

Nevertheless, upon almost every page of this history there is some quiet trace of the lofty motives which conducted them to their great enterprise, and of the simple heroism of their thoughts in pursuing it. They had undertaken the voyage, "for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith," and for the honor of their "king and country."[2] In computing the prodigious labors and sufferings of it, they deliberately judged themselves to be suitable to encounter them; for "it is not with us as with other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again."[3] "We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother-country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange and hard land, which yet in a great part we have by patience overcome."[4] With all their hard grip of the things of this world, their carefulness in bargains, their mechanic industry, their pecuniary thrift, they had a just estimate of the limited value of earthly possessions, and a sincere habit of unworldly-mindedness. Being baffled in one of their projects for getting to America, after having much trusted to this plan, they were greatly disappointed; and Bradford calls it "a right emblem, it may be, of the uncertain things of this world; that when men have toiled themselves for them, they vanish into smoke."[5] Upon their final departure from Leyden, he says: "So they left that goodly and pleasant city which had been their resting place near twelve years; but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits."[6]

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[1] "Hist. Plym. Plantation," 57. [2] Ibid. 89–90. [3] Ibid. 33.
[4] Ibid. 32. [5] Ibid. 41. [6] Ibid. 59.

Thus are made plain to us the commanding qualities of the mind and style of our first American historian,—justice, breadth, vigor, dignity, directness, and an untroubled command of strong and manly speech. Evidently he wrote without artistic consciousness or ambition. The daily food of his spirit was noble. He uttered himself, without effort, like a free man, a sage, and a Christian.

III.

Nathaniel Morton, whose name we place next to that of William Bradford merely on account of the close personal connection between the two men, was born in England in 1613. With his father's family he came to Plymouth in 1623. In 1624, his father died, and thenceforward Nathaniel was the object of paternal kindness from his illustrious uncle, Governor Bradford. In 1645, being thirty-two years old, he was elected secretary of Plymouth Colony, and continued to hold that office until his death forty years afterward.

The occupation of his life, his presence in the colony almost from the beginning, and his familiar acquaintance with its leading men, all directed his thoughts toward the composition of its history. The result was the publication at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1669, of "New England's Memorial," which the author himself describes as "a brief relation of the most memorable and remarkable passages of the providence of God manifested to the planters of New England in America, with special reference to the first colony thereof called New Plymouth."[1] He takes pains to mention that his principal authorities are the manuscript history of his uncle, and "certain diurnals of the honored Mr. Edward Winslow." The use which he made of these authorities was to transcribe large portions of them with almost literal exactness to his own

[1] Title-page.

pages.[1] Bradford's manuscript ends with 1646; Winslow's could not have continued later than 1649; and from about this time, Morton's history, deprived of the copious currents of their assistance, dwindles into a mere rill of obituary notices relating principally to godly ministers thereafter from time to time defunct.

Morton's modesty in alluding to his own literary merits would perhaps disarm us of severity in criticising him, even if we were not already intimidated by the quaint and tremendous dehortation with which he has undertaken to shield his book: "Let not the harshness of my style prejudice thy taste or appetite to the dish I present thee with. Accept it as freely as I give it. Carp not at what thou dost not approve, but use it as a remembrance of the Lord's goodness, to engage to true thankfulness and obedience; so it may be a help to thee in thy journey through the wilderness of this world, to that eternal rest which is only to be found in the heavenly Canaan."[2]

We need not expect to find in an author who is a mere historical copyist, any individual force or originality. Morton was shaped plastically by the hand of his sect and of his locality; and wherever he utters anything that is not the echo of Bradford or of Winslow, it is likely to be the echo of the common opinion or passion of the community in which he passed his painstaking life. He squares off, for example, against poor Samuel Gorton—the favorite target of orthodox New England invectives in those days—and safely pommels with blows a man who was already down,

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[1] The reader who cares to verify this statement may make comparison of the following passages, first in Davis's edition of Morton's "Memorial," and second in Bradford's History:

Pages 19–20 of Morton with pages 23–24 of Bradford.
" 23–24 " " " " 59–60 " "
" 30–32 " " " " 67–70 " "
" 35–36 " " " " 78–79 " "

[2] Morton's "Memorial," 16.

and whom everybody else was pommelling.[1] A far greater man than Samuel Gorton, Roger Williams, was handled by the historian in the same manner, and apparently for the same reason.[2] The historian was in no respect superior to his age; and the venom and the pettiness of his age mix themselves with the ink that flows from his pen.

For nearly two hundred years his book has enjoyed the reputation of an original and a classic document in our early annals. Thomas Prince, the historian, indicates its great celebrity in his time by the remark that in his own childhood next to religious history he was instructed in the history of New England, and that the first book put into his hands upon the latter subject was Morton's "Memorial."[3] Since the recent publication of Bradford's history, however, that of Morton has declined rapidly toward the fate of being utterly unread. Henceforward they who wish to seek our earliest history at its head waters will of course pass by Nathaniel Morton, and draw from the same limpid and sweet well-spring that he drew from.

IV.

In the early spring of the year 1630, a fleet of four vessels sailed out into the sea from a beautiful harbor in the Isle of Wight, their prows pointed westward. On board that fleet were the greatest company of wealthy and cul-

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[1] Morton's "Memorial," 202–206. He describes Gorton as "a proud and pestilent seducer, and deeply leavened with blasphemous and familistical opinions."

[2] A letter of Roger Williams's has lately come to light, written in the very year in which Morton's "Memorial" was published, and referring with characteristic magnanimity and playfulness to Morton's habit of praising the saints who fitted the regnant fashion of New England piety, and of damning those who fitted it not. The letter is addressed to his dear friend, the younger Winthrop: "Sir, since I saw you, I have read Morton's 'Memorial,' and rejoice at the encomiums of your father and other precious worthies, though I be a reprobate, *contemptâ vilior algâ*." Narr. Club Pub. VI. 333.

[3] Prince, "Chron. Hist. N. E." Pref.

tivated persons that have ever emigrated in any one voyage from England to America. They were prosperous English Puritans. They had in England houses and lands and social consideration. With all the faults of England, in church and state, they loved her still. Their departure from England was not the effort of poverty in an old country seeking to better itself in a new one, nor of smirched reputations fleeing away to find in distance the solace of being unknown, nor of uneasy spirits changing their abode on account of the mere frenzy for changing something. Their expatriation was their own act; and it was prompted both by the noblest self-denial and by the shrewdest statesmanship.

Foremost among them in intellectual power and in weight of character was John Winthrop, already chosen governor of the Massachusetts company, and qualified by every personal trait to be the conductor and the statesman of the new Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay. He was then just forty-two years old. Born at Groton, in Suffolk, of a family honored in that neighborhood for its high character and its wealth, he had been trained to the law, as his father and his grandfather had been before him. He was a man of good books and of good manners; catholic in opinion and sympathy; a deeply conscientious man; not willing that his life should be a thing of extemporized policies and make-shifts, but building it up clear from the foundation on solid principle.

The little fleet that carried to New England John Winthrop and his fortunes, was more than two months upon the voyage; and he made such use of this sea-born leisure, that we have occasion to commemorate it yet. Brooding upon the new life they were about to begin in the new land, he saw that only in one way could it be saved from becoming base, discordant, and disappointing: that way was by their carrying into it, for every day and for every act, the Christ-like spirit of disinterestedness. The thought grew in his mind and asserted itself in the

form of a little treatise which he entitled "A Model of Christian Charity."[1] It is an elaborate exposition of the Christian doctrine of unselfishness, and bears especially upon the condition awaiting the colonists in the new, perilous, and struggling life toward which they were going. It shows that if each man be for himself, their great enterprise would come to nothing. Only by mutual love and help, and a grand, patient self-denial, could they all meet the tasks that lay before them. "We must be knit together in this work as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities for the supply of other's necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience, and liberality. We must delight in each other; make other's conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work as members of the same body."[2]

As John Winthrop, while upon the voyage, wrote this discourse to prepare the spirits of himself and his associates for the toils and frets and depressions of their pioneer life, so also immediately upon going on board ship he began another piece of writing, which he continued to work at not only during the rest of the voyage but during the rest of his life, and which is a treasure beyond price among our early historic memorials. It was on Easter Monday, March the twenty-ninth, 1630, his ships still riding in the harbor of Cowes, that he wrote the first record in that journal of his which grew to be "The History of New England." His plan was to jot down significant experiences in the daily life of his company, not only while at sea but after their arrival in America,—thus writing their history as fast as they should make it. Accordingly, the long voyage is registered in an almost daily

[1] Printed in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. VII. 31–48. [2] Ibid. 46–47.

chronicle, giving faithful mention of the changes of the winds, the various behavior of the ocean, the routine and the caprices of ship-life, the temperate diversion afforded by daily prayers and frequent sermons, the interchange of social courtesies between the passengers belonging to the different vessels, and such other items as were wont to fill up the sluggish days of sea-travel in the seventeenth century. At last, on the eighth of June, "we had sight of land to the north-west about ten leagues. . . . We had now fair sunshine weather, and so pleasant a sweet air as did much refresh us, and there came a smell off the shore like the smell of a garden."[1]

For one in Winthrop's station the end of his voyage was the end of his leisure; and his journal thenceforward shows that he had too much to do every day to write much about it. Here are frequent breaks and blanks in the record, rallyings of remembrance, many a great day having to content itself with small mention, tokens enough that the resolute diarist was forced to wrestle continually with the temptation of yielding all to the overpowering encroachments of haste and fatigue. Yet, in spite of all, he kept on sturdily, making such headway as he could, fixing a date even when he could not expand a scene, and securing to us, notwithstanding all interruption and reticence, a clear, true story of the way in which the fathers and mothers of the commonwealth of Massachusetts labored and suffered in the days of that stern beginning. For almost twenty years the story went forward, from 1630 until a few weeks before the writer's death in 1649. It is quite evident that Winthrop wrote what he did with the full purpose of having it published as a history; but he wrote it amid the hurry and weariness of his unloitering life, with no anxiety about style, with no other purpose than to tell the truth in plain and honest fashion. The native qualities of the man were lofty, self-respecting, grave; by culture and

[1] John Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 27.

habit he expressed himself spontaneously in dignified and calm words; and at times, when the thought lifted him, he rose to a stately unconscious eloquence. He was no artist, only a thinker and a doer. Of course he never aimed at effect. His moral qualities are plainly stamped upon his manner of expression—moderation, disinterestedness, reverence, pity, dignity, love of truth and of justice. The prevailing tone is judicial: he tells the truth squarely, even against himself. The greatest incidents in the life of the colony are reported; also the least. The pathos, and heroism, and pettiness of their life, all are here. "My son, Henry Winthrop, was drowned at Salem."[1] "A cow died at Plymouth, and a goat at Boston, with eating Indian corn."[2] "Monday we kept a court."[3] "The rivers were frozen up, and they of Charlestown could not come to the sermon at Boston till the afternoon at high water."[4] "Billington executed at Plymouth for murdering one."[5] "The governor and deputy and Mr. Nowell . . . went to Watertown to confer with Mr. Phillips, the pastor, and Mr. Brown, the elder of the congregation there, about an opinion which they had published that the churches of Rome were true churches. The matter was debated before many of both congregations, and by the approbation of all the assembly except three, was concluded an error."[6] "The night before, alarm was given in divers of the plantations. It arose through the shooting off some pieces at Watertown by occasion of a calf which Sir Richard Saltonstall had lost."[7] "At the same court one Henry Linne was whipped and banished for writing letters into England full of slander against our government and orders of our churches."[8] "The governor went on foot to Agawam, and because the people there wanted a minister, spent the Sabbath with them, and exercised by way of prophecy, and returned home the tenth."[9]

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[1] John Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 34. [2] Ibid. 44.
[3] Ibid. 35. [4] Ibid. 47. [5] Ibid. 43. [6] Ibid. 70.
[7] Ibid. 59. [8] Ibid. 73. [9] Ibid. 154–155.

That last bit of narration is delightful for the clear glimpse it gives us of the spirit of early New England society, and of the plain devout ways of "the governor" himself. Again and again this good governor comes into the story, always in thoroughly modest reference. Once, he tells us, he got benighted in the woods, and had to pass the whole night there; and out of this arose an amusing little incident, which, with the peril it involved of having his moral reputation misconstrued, he faithfully relates, all unconscious of the somewhat comic aspect in which he would thus present himself for a moment to the contemplation of posterity: "The governor being at his farm-house at Mistick, walked out after supper, and took a piece in his hand, supposing he might see a wolf; . . . and being about half a mile off, it grew suddenly dark, so as, in coming home, he mistook his path, and went till he came to a little house of Sagamore John, which stood empty. There he stayed; and having a piece of match in his pocket (for he always carried about him match and a compass, and in summer-time snake-weed) he made a good fire near the house, and lay down upon some old mats which he found there, and so spent the night, sometimes walking by the fire, sometimes singing psalms, and sometimes getting wood, but could not sleep. It was through God's mercy a warm night; but a little before day it began to rain, and having no cloak he made shift by a long pole to climb up into the house. In the morning there came thither an Indian squaw: but perceiving her before she had opened the door, he barred her out; yet she stayed there a great while, essaying to get in, and at last she went away, and he returned safe home, his servants having been much perplexed for him, and having walked about, and shot off pieces, and hallooed in the night; but he heard them not."[1]

There lived in those days near Medford a farmer named

[1] John Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 74–75.

Dalkin; and to him and his wife there happened a grotesque experience to which they are indebted for being immortalized in Winthrop's usually solemn pages. They were coming home by night, and had to cross the river at the ford before the tide had fallen. "The husband adventured over, and finding it too deep persuaded his wife to stay awhile; but it raining very sore, she would needs adventure over, and was carried away with the stream past her depth. Her husband, not daring to go help her, cried out; and thereupon his dog, being at his house near by, came forth, and seeing something in the water swam to her; and she caught hold on the dog's tail, so he drew her to the shore and saved her life."[1]

There is in this history one vein of writing that is of deep interest to us now for its frank mention of certain strange psychological phenomena in the experience of our ancestors. Living as they did on a narrow strip of land, between the two infinities of the ocean and the wilderness, and under the consciousness that the mysteries of the unseen world were close about them, it is not strange that they fell into glooms and fantasies. They had overpowering manifestations of spiritual force; they heard awful voices in the air; strange sights glimmered before their eyes on the verge of the forest, or flitted along the sea. Of all this, here are characteristic examples: "About midnight three men coming in a boat to Boston, saw two lights arise out of the water near the north point of the town cove, in form like a man, and went at a small distance to the town, and so to the south point, and there vanished away. They saw them about a quarter of an hour, being between the town and the governor's garden. The like was seen by many, a week after, arising about Castle Island, and in one fifth of an hour came to John Gallop's Point. . . . A light like the moon arose about the north-east point in Boston, and met the former at Nottle's

[1] John Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." II. 195.

Island, and there they closed in one, and then parted, and closed and parted divers times, and so went over the hill in the island and vanished. Sometimes they shot out flames, and sometimes sparkles. This was about eight of the clock in the evening, and was seen by many. About the same time a voice was heard upon the water between Boston and Dorchester, calling out in a most dreadful manner, 'Boy! boy! come away! come away!' and it suddenly shifted from one place to another a great distance about twenty times. It was heard by divers godly persons."[1]

There is one portion of this History that has acquired great celebrity: it is the one embodying Winthrop's speech, in 1645, in the general court, on his being acquitted of the charge of having exceeded his authority as deputy-governor. The speech as a whole, especially when read in connection with the touching circumstances of its delivery, is one of great nobility, pathos, and grave eloquence;[2] and one passage of it, containing Winthrop's statement of the nature of liberty, is of pre-eminent merit, worthy of being placed by the side of the weightiest and most magnanimous sentences of John Locke or Algernon Sidney. A distinguished American publicist has declared that this is the best definition of liberty in the English language, and that in comparison with it what Blackstone says about liberty seems puerile. "The great questions," says Winthrop, "that have troubled the country, are about the authority of the magistrates and the liberty of the people. . . . Concerning liberty, I observe a great mistake in the country about that. There is a twofold liberty, natural, . . . and civil or federal. The first is common to man with beasts and other creatures. By this, man, as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do

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[1] John Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." II. 184–185.

[2] For instances of European comment upon it, see "Life and Letters of John Winthrop," II. 342–343.

what he lists; it is a liberty to evil as well as to good. This liberty is incompatible and inconsistent with authority, and cannot endure the least restraint of the most just authority. The exercise and maintaining of this liberty makes men grow more evil, and in time to be worse than brute beasts: *omnes sumus licentiâ deteriores.*[1] This is that great enemy of truth and peace, that wild beast, which all the ordinances of God are bent against, to restrain and subdue it. The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal; it may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man, in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions amongst men themselves. This liberty is the proper end and object of authority, and cannot subsist without it; and it is a liberty to that only which is good, just, and honest. This liberty you are to stand for, with the hazard not only of your goods but of your lives, if need be. Whatsoever crosseth this, is not authority, but a distemper thereof. This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority; it is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. . . . If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke; but if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then will you quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you, in all the administrations of it, for your good. Wherein, if we fail at any time, we hope we shall be willing by God's assistance to hearken to good advice from any of you, or in any other way of God; so shall your liberties be preserved in upholding the honor and power of authority amongst you."[2]

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[1] The governor thus recalled, with a slight variation in the order of the words, a line from Terence, Heautontimorumenos, III. 1, 74.

[2] John Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." II. 279–282.

V.

The explorer of our early literature meets at many a turn in his wanderings one title whose quaintness appeals to his imagination as well as to his curiosity: "The Wonder-Working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England." The book to which this title belongs was written by a man who had made something of a name in his day for quite other things than writing books, Captain Edward Johnson, immigrant in 1630 to New England from Herne Hill, in Kent; a man of property in both countries; principal founder of the town of Woburn, in Massachusetts, in 1640; and from that year until his death in 1672, entrusted by his fellow-townsmen with almost every responsible office they had to bestow—town-clerk, delegate to the general court, and so forth. He was a very devout and explicit Puritan; his square, stalwart common-sense made itself felt in public and private; he had a strong taste and aptitude for military affairs; and it is significant of his soundness of brain that, amid the general frenzy of the early witchcraft excitement, he was one of the few that kept their heads cool and opposed all judicial prosecution of those uncomely hags that were suspected of unlawful intimacy with the devil.

Had a man like this—a ship-carpenter and farmer, unlettered, unversed in affairs, a sort of rural alderman and militia-hero—lived anywhere else than in New England in the seventeenth century, we should by no means have suspected him of any inclinations toward authorship. But whatever inclinations of this kind he had he could not help; for there was so earnest and stimulating a quality in the grand tasks which these men of New England had undertaken in the world, that even ship-carpenters and country-politicians could not escape the occasional propensity to clutch the pen, and rough-hew a handful of sentences, especially when any good thing was to be ac-

complished by the job. It was no ambition of authorship that prompted Edward Johnson to write his book, but an important tangible result which could be achieved in no other way. He handled the pen as he did the sword and the broadaxe—to accomplish something with it; and the precise object just then before him was this. Through such unfriendly gossips as Sir Christopher Gardiner, Philip Ratcliff, and Thomas Morton, the people of England had been all along receiving ill tidings of the people of Massachusetts; and it was somebody's duty to put down these lies by the truth. The truth was well known to Edward Johnson. Why might it not be the duty of Edward Johnson to tell it? To him it seemed plain that the planting of God's church and state in New England was a thing that God himself had taken a very active part in, in fact was directly responsible for; that instead of being calumniated, it ought to be celebrated; and that the straightforward way of doing this would be merely to give a history of the wonder-working providence of God in the country spoken of.[1] This single object, held steadily before him as he wrote, gave an epic unity to his work, and makes it strong and interesting yet, notwithstanding the literary clumsiness of the author.

The significance and the glory of God's intervention in all that mighty business of erecting a great religious commonwealth in America could not be felt without a knowledge of the dismal state of England at the time God began to rescue his chosen ones from it. Accordingly, the book opens with a homely but graphic picture of "the sad condition of England when this people removed." It was in this dark time that "Christ the glorious king of his churches" came to their deliverance; and in 1628, he stirred up his heralds to make this proclamation: "All

[1] His book, "Wonder-Working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England," was first published anonymously in London in 1654; reprinted in 2 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. II. III. IV. VII. VIII.; again reprinted, with elaborate introduction and notes by Wm. Frederick Poole, Andover, 1867.

you, the people of Christ that are here oppressed, imprisoned, and scurrilously derided, gather yourselves together, your wives and little ones, and answer to your several names, as you shall be shipped for his service in the western world, and more especially for planting the united colonies of New England, where you are to attend the service of the King of Kings."[1]

Here we have the clue to the whole book. The departure from England, the long peril on "a dreadful and terrible ocean," and the erection of a pure church in "the far-remote and vast wilderness," are but the successive stages in a stupendous religious campaign, inaugurated by Christ for a hallowed purpose, and sustained by him with marvellous exhibitions of divine power. Their emigration was, in the author's view, not a secular act but a sacred one; they who went to New England went upon a spiritual crusade; they were not adventurers, wandering traders and agriculturists seeking earthly gain, but soldiers of Christ, doing battle under his banner, fighting in a holy war, and looking for their reward beyond the clouds. The whole book is pervaded by this thought; and a thousand incidental phrases express it. The colonists are "brethren and fellow-soldiers;"[2] the addition at one time of forty-six freemen is the addition of so many "soldiers listed;"[3] in looking about upon their antagonists they "face to the right," they "face to the front," they "face to the left;"[4] and the great service of "this poor people" in populating the "howling desert," is simply "marching manfully on—the Lord assisting—through the greatest difficulties and forest labors that ever any with such weak means have done."[5]

Believing thus with a stanch and literal faith that they were volunteers in the immediate service of their "great Lord Paramount," they had the invincible cheer and

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[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 2. [2] Ibid. 17.
[3] Ibid. 56. [4] Ibid. 113. [5] Ibid. 84–85.

courage of knowing that he "stood not as an idle spectator beholding his people's ruth and their enemies' rage, but as an actor in all actions, to bring to naught the desires of the wicked, . . . having also the ordering of every weapon in its first produce, guiding every shaft that flies, leading each bullet to his place of settling, and weapon to the wound it makes."[1] Under such a leader, upon such a crusade, the humblest soldier was ennobled, and the pettiest undertaking made grand: "for the Lord Christ intends to achieve greater matters by this little handful than the world is aware of;" and "although it may seem a mean thing to be a New England soldier," yet some of them were to "have the battering and beating down, scaling, winning, and wasting the overtopping towers of the hierarchy."[2] And as the august leadership and the sublime service under which they marched gave rank and stateliness to them and to their small doings, so it lifted them out of timidity and petulance, and armed them with a virtue that could defy both temptation and pain: "As Death, the King of Terror, with all his dreadful attendance inhumane and barbarous, tortures doubled and trebled by all the infernal furies, have appeared but light and momentary to the soldiers of Christ Jesus, so also the pleasure, profits, and honors of this world, set forth in their most glorious splendor and magnitude by the alluring Lady of Delight, proffering pleasant embraces, cannot entice with her siren songs such soldiers of Christ, whose aims are elevated by him many millions above that brave warrior Ulysses."[3]

But from premises like these followed some stern and terrible conclusions; for if they were actual soldiers of Christ, and in a state of war, any toleration of disbelievers was an enormous military crime—it was giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Hence came, by a logic that had

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[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 116. [2] Ibid. 10–11.
[3] Ibid. 25.

in it no flaw, the whole dire philosophy and ethics of persecution: "You are not set up for tolerating times, nor shall any of you be content with this that you are set at liberty; but take up your arms and march manfully on till all opposers of Christ's kingly power be abolished. And as for you who are called to sound forth his silver trumpets, blow loud and shrill to this chiefest treble tune—for the armies of the great Jehovah are at hand."[1]

It is in this spirit of rapt and austere Puritan confidence, that Edward Johnson wrote his history of New England from the establishment of Salem in 1628, to the time of John Endicott's governorship in 1651. His words are those of a spectator of most of the events which he describes. He omits many things which we should now like to read of, but which did not so immediately illustrate the religious significance of New England life. He tells particularly the story of the successive formation of towns and churches, as the people pushed inland, and up and down the coast. He chronicles the annual elections of governor and deputy-governor; the arrival of godly ministers from England; the troubles incident to all primitive settlements in a rough country and in a harsh climate; Indian wars; religious controversies; and, in general, the pangs and risks and deliverances of God's chosen troops in their appointed campaign in the wilderness.

The value of this book, of course, is not that which attaches to what we commonly call history. Here are lacking impartiality, coolness, comprehensiveness, critical judgment, and the delight of a masterly and sweet expression. It is crude enough in thought and style, avowedly partisan, and pitched upon a key of wild religious rhapsody. Yet with all its limitations, it is the sincere testimony of an eye-witness and an honest man; it preserves the very spirit and aroma of New England thought and experience in the seventeenth century; it supplies us with a multitude

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[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 7. See also 90, 91, 101.

of tints and tones which, without this book, we should not have; its very faults of diction, its grotesque and fanatic zeal, its narrowness, its harshness, its frank and blood-thirsty Hebraisms, its touching and sublime simplicity of trust, its choice of what is noble and everlasting in existence, its disdain of lies and toys and fleshly phantoms, all make it a most authentic and a priceless memorial of American character and life in the heroic epoch of our earliest men.

An admirable quality in the book is its concentrated sketches of the leading men of the time. Thus, John Endicott was "a fit instrument to begin this wilderness work, of courage bold, undaunted, yet sociable, and of a cheerful spirit, loving and austere, applying himself to either as occasion served."[1] His references to the great personages in secular life, Winthrop, Sir Harry Vane, Hopkins, Bradstreet, and others, are indeed laudatory, but they are cold in comparison with the intensity of his reverent language concerning the principal ministers of the young nation. The vocabulary of Puritan admiration is strained to give utterance to his laic affection and loyalty towards "the grave, godly, and judicious Hooker," "the reverend and much desired Mr. John Cotton," "the rhetorical Mr. Stone," "the reverend and holy man of God, Mr. Nathaniel Rogers," and "the holy, heavenly, sweet-affecting, and soul-ravishing minister, Mr. Thomas Shepard." The natural rebound of this rapturous enthusiasm for the ministers was an equally rapturous contempt for their opponents—the unsanctioned preachers, the heretics, babblers, and illiterate agitators who infested those pioneer communities; and in his opinion all that was odious in such talking vagrants was brought together in the person of the troublesome prophetess of New England, Anne Hutchinson. He seldom condescends to mention her by name; but he points at her with scornful allusions that are unmis-

[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 19.

takable. She is the "woman that preaches better gospel than any of your black-coats that have been at the Ninneversity;"[1] she is the "master-piece of women's wit, . . . backed with the sorcery of a second who had much converse with the devil;"[2] she is "the grand-mistress of them all who ordinarily prated every Sabbath day."[3]

It would be true to say that there is hardly a trait of Puritanism, either noble or narrow or grim, that does not represent itself in some line of this book. Here, for example, we have in the author's description of what the ruling elders should be, the lofty confidence of Puritanism in the unseen and supernal Righteousness: they should be "not greedily given to hoard up for themselves, but by their own example leading others to liberality and hospitality, having the earth in low esteem, and faith in exercise when cattle and corn fail."[4] For the narrowness of Puritanism, the examples here at hand are of an embarrassing multitude; but this may serve. The belief in a present, watchful, and benign Providence, is the source of the sweetest comfort and the most perfect fortitude that can live in human nature; but when this belief intensifies itself into a microscopic and picayune Providence, to be interpreted in detail by man as an expression of the divine favor or wrath in the case of every falling tower, or launched thunderbolt, or capsized sail-boat, or lost cow, it becomes a creed ministering to abject superstition and vindictiveness. Thus, Edward Johnson mentions, as an instance of "the sad hand of the Lord" against a person, the case of a certain barber of Boston who was summoned one day to Roxbury to draw a tooth, and who, being overwhelmed upon the journey by a snow-storm, was found several days after frozen to death: "in which sad accident this was taken into consideration by divers people, that

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[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 56.
[2] Ibid. 100.
[3] Ibid. 132.
[4] Ibid. 5.

this barber was more than ordinary laborious to draw men to those sinful errors that were formerly so frequent, . . . he having a fit opportunity, by reason of his trade, so soon as any were set down in his chair, he would commonly be cutting off their hair and the truth together."[1] And for the grimness of Puritanism, the following passage will be likely to satisfy the most exacting. After describing the famous war of extermination against the Pequots, the author thus concludes: "The Lord in mercy toward his poor churches, having thus destroyed these bloody barbarous Indians, he returns his people in safety to their vessels, where they take account of their prisoners. The squaws and some young youths they brought home with them; and finding the men to be deeply guilty of the crimes they undertook the war for, they brought away only their heads."[2]

In a book like this we are not apt to expect much gayety; but one may find in it, here and there, some hint of an effort on the author's part to relax his visage into a smile. Thus, in one place he deigns to speak rather facetiously of so serious a thing as the Atlantic Ocean, which he calls in familiar style "the ditch between England and their now place of abode;" and he even proceeds to the playful remark that this ditch, forsooth, "they could not leap over with a lope-staff,"[3]—doubtless the nearest approach to a jest that the author of "Wonder-Working Providence" was ever frivolous enough to indulge in.

But though he intended it not, the book is nevertheless somewhat mirth-inspiring. Its very seriousness has a comic aspect, most of all when it rises into the awful shape of verse; for, this retired ship-carpenter of Woburn hewed out poetry in a manner worthy of his original trade. His first official entry in the town records of Woburn took a metri-

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[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 138. [2] Ibid. 117.*
[3] Ibid. 20.

cal form; and in his history, no important person is introduced upon the scene without some brief poetic tribute. He has indeed a half abashed air, a virgin coyness, so to speak, as he brings forward these tiny trinkets in rhyme, as if he were himself remotely conscious of some impropriety in the manufacture of such things by a respectable man like himself; and yet, on the other hand, he seems to have a sturdy faith that since these things are poetry, there must be a sort of immortalizing virtue in them. "And now," says he, as he is about to hold up before us his poetic apostrophe to Governor John Endicott, "let no man be offended at the author's rude verse, penned of purpose to keep in memory the names of such worthies as Christ made strong for himself, in this unwonted work of his."[1] One couplet of this little poem will be quite enough:

"Strong valiant John, wilt thou march on and take up station first,
Christ called hath thee, his soldier be, and fail not of thy trust."[2]

The following lines are a portion of his "metre" composed "for the future remembrance" of the celebrated Hugh Peters:

"With courage, bold Peters, a soldier stout,
In wilderness, for Christ, begins to war;
Much work he finds 'mongst people, yet holds out;
With fluent tongue he stops fantastic jar."[3]

But even from the literary aspect there are some qualities of this book that we may not use for our mirth, yea for our laughter, when we are waspish. It has not infrequently, even amid its most ungainly sentences, a charm of picturesque simplicity, an unconscious and unadorned beauty of honest speech. Speaking of the work they hoped to do in the fields when a certain long winter should

[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 19.
[2] Ibid. 19.
[3] Ibid. 79.

have passed away, he says that they discoursed "between one while and another, of the great progress they would make after the summer's sun had changed the earth's white furred gown into a green mantle."[1] One of their Providential deliverances on the sea as they were nearing the American coast is thus pictured to us: "The night newly breaking off her darkness, and the daylight being clouded with a gross vapor, as if night's curtains remained half-shut, the seamen and passengers standing on the decks suddenly fixed their eyes on a great boat, as they deemed; and anon after, they spied another, and after that another; but musing on the matter, they perceived themselves to be in great danger of many great rocks. With much terror and affrightment they turned the ship about, expecting every moment to be dashed in pieces against the rocks. But He whose providence brought them in, piloted them out again, without any danger, to their great rejoicing."[2] In speaking of Christ's tenderness and care toward his persecuted church, the author has a sentence that anyone might take to be a bit of the prose of John Milton: "With his own blessed hands wiping away the tears that trickle down her cheeks, drying her dankish eyes, and hushing her sorrowful sobs in his sweet bosom."[3] In the following sentence, wherein he cheers up the good people of New England by reminding them of more helpers already on the way to them from England, one may hear a sort of plaintive and lingering melody: "There are for your further aid herein many more of these sincere soldiers floating upon the great ocean toward you."[4]

VI.

In our first literary period there remain two other historical writers who have this in common, that their writ-

[1] "Wonder-Working Providence," 20.
[2] Ibid. 35.
[3] Ibid. 117.
[4] Ibid. 118.

ings relate to the Indians of New England, and to the dreadful conflicts that raged there in the seventeenth century between those Indians and the white people who had undertaken to settle near them.

The ability of the English to establish themselves in New England in spite of the objections of the original inhabitants, was tested in a serious manner twice, and only twice. The first occasion was in 1637 and gave rise to the Pequot war; the second was in 1675 and brought on King Philip's war. Of course, at other times, before and afterward, there were innumerable petty collisions of the rival races, casual jets of murder, fitful paroxysms of wrath and vengeance on both sides; but these two were the only occasions on which the red men in that portion of the continent, alarmed and maddened by the danger ever swelling and darkening over them from the increasing multitude of their English invaders, deliberately combined in large numbers, formed comprehensive plans, and moved toward the extermination of the English colonists with a method in their ferocity, with a wide-reaching concert of action, with a skill and a ruthless vigor, that for a time threw some doubt over the possibility of preserving the English settlements there.

These events are now so far away from us that we do not realize their appalling character; but during the first century and a half of American history, the Indian peril was the one frightful fact perpetually hovering, by day and by night, near every white community. These two wars were the two great acts in early New England history. They marked the heroic epochs of colonial existence. The men who, in these two wars, led the colonists to victory and to safety were thenceforward the popular heroes, the persons of might and renown. It is not strange that each of these tremendous conflicts should have a literature of its own—a crop of writings commemorative of events that had brought to every cottage in New England so much both of agony and of exultation.

Of the first of these wars—that with the Pequots—Captain John Mason was the historian as well as the hero. On many accounts he is an interesting personage for us to look at in that early time. Though less famous now than Captain Miles Standish, he was in that age fully his equal in reputation, even as he fully equalled him in military service. Like Miles Standish, too, he had been trained to warfare in the Netherlands, where his commander was that Sir Thomas Fairfax who afterward became so distinguished as the leader of the parliamentary forces in the English civil wars; and who, while so engaged, remembered his ancient military pupil then in New England, and sent to him an invitation to come back to England and take a hand in the fight then going forward. But John Mason had important work to do in the new world; and he staid there, and did it. And he did his work so well that his very name became a terror to the Indian tribes, and was a wall of safety around the scattered farmhouses and the feeble villages of his pioneer countrymen. Moreover he lived to a good old age, honored to the last for the courage and the generous wisdom of his life.

It was at the request of the general court of Connecticut that he wrote "The History of the Pequot War,"[1] a work of only thirty-three pages, giving a plain but vigorous narrative of a very plain and very vigorous campaign. Naturally enough, the historian writes not from documents, but from his own recollection of the events in which he bore so large a part. His style is that of a fighter rather than of a writer; there is an honest bluntness about it, an unaffected rough simplicity, a manly forth-rightness of diction, all the charm of authenticity and strength. It is fortunate that he dashed off his little book without the

[1] First printed by Increase Mather in 1677 in his "Relation of the Troubles" with the Indians, and by him erroneously attributed to John Allyn. In 1736 it was republished by Thomas Prince. Prince's edition is reprinted in 2 Mass. Hist. Coll. VIII. 120–153, and the latter is the edition referred to in the present work.

expectation of printing it: "I never had thought that this should have come to the press . . . ; if I had, I should have endeavored to have put a little more varnish upon it."[1] We like his bluff narrative all the more because the varnish was left off; and we like him all the more as we get acquainted with the modest and frank spirit in which he wrote it. "I shall only draw the curtain," he says, "and open my little casement, that so others of larger hearts and abilities may let in a bigger light; that so, at least, some small glimmering may be left to posterity, what difficulties and obstructions their forefathers met with in their first settling these desert parts of America."[2]

The history begins with an account of the first treacherous assaults of the Pequot Indians upon the English "about the year 1632," and of their further acts of perfidy and violence until, in the year 1637, they had drawn other Indian tribes into a conspiracy for the annihilation of the white settlements in Connecticut. The condition of the latter "did look very sad, for those Pequots were a great people, being strongly fortified, cruel, warlike, munitioned, and so forth; and the English but an handful in comparison."[3] In May, 1637, the English, knowing that the hour was come, gathered two little armies, one under Captain John Underhill, the other under Captain John Mason, and pushed swiftly into the country of the Pequots, and by night drew near to the fort at Mystic in which the most of the Pequot warriors were gathered. There the white men lay down, "much wearied with hard travel, keeping great silence; . . . the rocks were our pillows; yet rest was pleasant. . . . We appointed our guards and placed our sentinels at some distance, who heard the enemy singing at the fort, who continued that strain until midnight, with great insulting and rejoicing."[4] By daybreak, the Indians having sunk into a deep sleep, the

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[1] "The Hist. of the Pequot War," 128.
[2] Ibid. 128.
[3] Ibid. 132.
[4] Ibid. 137-138.

whites awoke, crept up to the fort, forced their way into it, and got the savages within their grip. Sword and musket did their work too slowly. "The Captain told them that we should never kill them after that manner; . . . we must burn them; and immediately stepping into the wigwam . . . brought out a firebrand, and putting it into the mats with which they were covered, set the wigwams on fire. . . . When it was thoroughly kindled the Indians ran as men most dreadfully amazed. And indeed such a dreadful terror did the Almighty let fall upon their spirits, that they would fly from us and run into the very flames. . . . And when the fort was thoroughly fired, command was given that all should fall off and surround the fort. . . . The fire . . . did swiftly overrun the fort, to the extreme amazement of the enemy: . . . some of them climbing to the top of the palisado; others of them running into the very flames; many of them, gathering to windward, lay pelting at us with their arrows, and we repaid them with our small shot. Others of the stoutest issued forth, as we did guess, to the number of forty—who perished by the sword. . . . Thus were the stout-hearted spoiled, having slept their last sleep; and none of their men could find their hands. Thus did the Lord judge among the heathen, filling the place with dead bodies. . . . In little more than one hour's space was their impregnable fort, with themselves, utterly destroyed, to the number of six or seven hundred. . . . There were only seven taken captive, and about seven escaped."[1]

Such was the famous 'Mystic-fight,' a thorough piece of work, fought over again and again in talk around many a New England fire-side for a hundred years afterward, and never forgotten by the red men who were left alive to remember anything. With that fight the war was really over, even as all was over with the terrible tribe of

[1] "The Hist. of the Pequot War," 139–141.

the Pequots; and the book, after relating some minor incidents, more or less bloody, rises at the close into a Davidic chant of exultation at the victory of Jehovah over them that do evil, and at the glorious deliverance wrought by him for his people.[1]

VII.

The reputation of Daniel Gookin has fallen among us far below his deserts. As we study his writings, we see shining through them the signals of a very noble manhood, —modesty, tenderness, strength, devoutness, a heart full of sympathy for every kind of distress, a hand able and quick to reach out and obey the promptings of his heart. Then, too, we are impressed by his uncommon intellectual value. We find that he had width and grip in his ideas; his mind was trained to orderly movement; his style rose clear and free above the turbid and pedantic rhetoric of his age and neighborhood; his reading was shown, not in the flapping tags of quotation, but in a diffused intelligence, fullness, and poise of thought; as an historian, he had the primary virtues—truth, fairness, lucidity.

Thus, as we begin to get acquainted with the man through his writings and to like him more and more, we turn with quite a new zest to the study of his personal history. His life, we find, was a noble one from end to end: not in all respects prosperous, but rugged and sometimes sorrowful; having in fact the veiled prosperities of hinderance, disappointment, struggle; but cheerful always with the firmness and brightness of high trust, manly pluck, and Chris-

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[1] Other contemporaneous accounts of the Pequot war are: (a) "News from America," by Capt. John Underhill, London, 1638, reprinted in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. VI. 1–28; (b) "Relation of the Pequot Wars," by Lion Gardener, first printed in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. III. 131–160; (c) "A True Relation of the late Battle fought in New England between the English and the Pequot Savages," by the Rev. Philip Vincent, London, 1638, reprinted in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. VI. 29–43. All these have historical value, none that is literary.

tian resignation. Moreover, he belonged to that large type of manhood that England produced so many specimens of in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Elizabethan men, who settled the antique quarrel between the life of thought and the life of action, by leading both lives. Over against this prosaic, old name of Daniel Gookin, it is right for us to set the two descriptive words that throw some gleam of poetry upon it—the words, author, soldier.

The date of his birth can be only approximately stated: it was about 1612. He probably came to America with his father in 1621. It is a notable thing about him that though he had grown up to manhood in the Cavalier colony of Virginia, in theology and in politics he was a very Puritan. But in the year 1643, Virginia had a renewed attack of the disease that was then epidemic throughout Christendom—the disease of religious intolerance; and under the paroxysms of this disease Virginia proceeded to expel from her borders certain persons who did not conform to the Episcopal church as there established. This seems to have been the cause of Gookin's removal to Massachusetts, where he was made a freeman of the colony in May, 1644; taking up his residence subsequently at Cambridge, which continued to be his home during the remainder of his long life. The aptitude of the man for public service was soon recognized; for he was thenceforward in constant employment in matters of war and peace, of piety and politics; he was made captain of militia, member of the house of deputies, speaker of the house of deputies, one of the general magistrates of the colony, a licenser of the printing press, and at last commander-in-chief of the colonial military forces. In 1655, and again in 1657, Gookin went to England, and spent two or three years there, enjoying the acquaintance and confidence of the Protector; for it was through Daniel Gookin that Cromwell sent to the men of Massachusetts his celebrated proposition, that they should abandon the rugged land in which they had settled and

transfer themselves to the balm and bloom of Jamaica. Of all Daniel Gookin's public employments, the one that was most congenial to his humane spirit was that of superintendent of the Indians within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. This position he held during the last thirty years of his life, performing its duties with a heartiness and fidelity that were more than official. During all those years he and the apostle Eliot went hand in hand in Christlike labor and provident care for the Indians; and when in 1675 and 1676 the red men of New England under the lead of King Philip made their last great concerted effort to exterminate the white men who had taken possession of their hunting-fields, Gookin and Eliot were among the very few persons who did not give way to insane terror and exasperation. Almost alone, these two men stood up against the popular delirium, and they pleaded even then on behalf of the execrated copper-face the pleas of reason, and Christian pity, and common justice. For this crime Gookin especially was for a time punished with the popular hatred. He was hooted at in public places. He said from the bench where he sat as a magistrate that it was dangerous for him to walk along the streets. He was denounced as a traitor to his own kind. But it was not in Daniel Gookin, doing the right, to bend before any sort of storm; and at last the storm passed by; and he abode still. Later in his life, the same resolute obstinacy, under altered circumstances, brought to him a popularity as prodigious as had been his previous unpopularity; for, when that dogged political conflict with Randolph and Andros came on, and the people of New England were in danger of being robbed both of property and of freedom by those rapacious menials of James the Second, once more the undaunted courage and the rock-like firmness of Daniel Gookin were a power in the land. He fought Randolph and Andros upon every item of their demands. He opposed every concession to them. He opposed the sending of agents to England. He opposed any submission to the

acts of trade. He stood for a strict construction of the colonial charter. He nourished his patriotic jealousy for every specific American right, political or commercial. He was the originator and the prophet of that immortal dogma of our national greatness—no taxation without representation. Of course, in this bitter and perilous battle with the enemies of his own people, his own people at least were with him; and he who ten years before had been so obnoxious to them that his name was "a by-word among men and boys,"[1] and that jeers and threats pursued him along the streets, in his last years was permitted to taste the flavor of a public approbation that filled all the air about him and thronged after his footsteps wherever he went. Finally, in honor of this man, three things remain to be said. First, his piety was Puritanic without being vitriolic. Second, he had been in the public service a large part of his life; but he died so poor that his surviving friend, the apostle Eliot, wrote to the bountiful and wise Robert Boyle in England, asking him in charity to send over to the poor man's widow the sum of ten pounds. Third, he was a white man; yet the rumor of his death carried sorrow into every red man's wigwam in Massachusetts.

The writings left to us by this grand old American patriarch and sage are two treatises, both historical, and both relating to the Indians of New England. He had indeed worked out an admirable plan for a general history of New England,—the most comprehensive and philosophical plan, perhaps, that was projected by any one before the present century. He was about sixty-two years old when he gave to the public a description of this plan; and in doing so he used these interesting sentences of self-reference: "You may here see my design, which I earnestly desired might have been drawn by a more able pen; and I have often earnestly moved able persons to under-

[1] "A Letter to London," quoted in Archæol. Am. II. 449, note.

take it; but not knowing of any, and being unwilling that a matter of so great concernment for the honor of God and the good of men, should be buried in oblivion, I have adventured in my old age, and in a plain style, to draw some rude delineaments of God's beautiful work in this land. I have, through grace, travelled half way in this work, as is said before; but in truth I find myself clogged with so many avocations, as my public employ among the English and Indians, and my own personal and family exercises, which by reason of my low estate in the world are the more obstructive and perplexing, so that I cannot proceed in this work so vigorously as I desire. Yet I shall endeavor, by God's assistance, if he please to spare me life and ability, to make what speedy progress I can. If this tract concerning the Indians find acceptance, I shall be the more encouraged to finish and send forth the other; which although it should prove very imperfect, by reason of the weakness and unworthiness of the author, yet I shall endeavor that it be drawn according to truth; and then, if it be of no other use, it may serve to inform my children, or possibly contribute some little help to a more able pen, to set forth the same thing, more exactly and exquisitely garnished, in after times."[1]

These sentences occur in the postscript of his first work, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," which he made ready for publication in 1674, and dedicated to Charles the Second. Though carefully finished for the press, the work slumbered in manuscript one hundred and eighteen years, and first awoke to the privilege of print in 1792, in the earliest volume of the Massachusetts Historical Society. It describes the several Indian nations of New England, their customs, their religious beliefs, their forms of government; it particularly tells of the Indians who had accepted Christianity; and it gives affectionate sketches of such noble white men as had devoted them-

[1] 1 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. I. 226.

selves to the task of helping the Indians to find the way to a better life. The author gathered his materials with care, and arranged them with clearness; and his book abounds in calm, pleasant, and judicial statements concerning those crabbed and forlorn creatures, earth-men, anthropoid animals, whose fate it seemed to be to wither and disappear before the breath of the pale-faces.

The second work written by Daniel Gookin was finished in 1677, and was dedicated to Robert Boyle. It was probably sent over to England for publication; and in England it remained in manuscript, and was lost, until the present century, when it was brought to the light once more, sent back to this country, and in the year 1836 printed for the first time.[1] This also relates to the Indians of New England; and its composition was prompted by certain incidents connected with King Philip's war, at that time but recently ended. That terrible war had kindled among the white inhabitants of New England a delirium of wrath against the Indians which cast away all pity, all justice; which embraced in an awful doom of destruction the Christian Indian and the pagan, the friend and the enemy. Against this brutal and indiscriminate fury, Daniel Gookin had all along protested; and he wrote this book for the purpose of showing that the Indians who had avowed themselves Christians, had taken no part in the conspiracy that their pagan kindred had formed for the extermination of the English. It was entitled "An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England." It is written with tranquillity of tone, without bitterness even toward his own bitter assailants; and its calm and massive accumulation of facts rises to an irresistible and even pathetic vindication of the Christian Indians from the monstrous charges that had been cast against them. It shows that months before the war actually burst upon the white settlements, these true-

[1] By Am. Antiqu. Soc. in Archæol. Am. II. 423–534.

hearted Indian disciples gave repeated warning of the coming danger; that when at last the war came on, they offered their services as soldiers, servants, scouts, and spies; that down to the very close of the war, they rendered invaluable aid to the English in many ways; and yet, that from the beginning to the end, they and their harmless families were treated by their white patrons with unmeasured contempt and distrust; that they were insulted everywhere, were denied the ordinary comforts of life, and that some of them were murdered atrociously in cold blood, even by white women; but that in spite of all these cruelties, they remained faithful to the English, and bore their hardships with a meekness and a fortitude which implied that these swarthy religious disciples of the white men had already got far beyond their teachers in the scholarship of the Christian graces. "I had need apologize," says the author, "for this long story concerning the Indians. But the true reason of being so particular is that I might, in the words of truth and soberness, clear the innocency of those Indians, unto all pious and impartial men that shall peruse this script; and so far as in me lies, to vindicate the hand of God and religion that these Christians profess and practise; and to declare I cannot join with the multitude that would cast them all into the same lump with the profane and brutish heathen, who are as great enemies to our Christian Indians as they are to the English."[1]

In spite of old age, poverty, and public cares, Daniel Gookin completed his large scheme of a "History of New England;" but the manuscript, which at his death was left to a son, is supposed to have been burned some years afterward in the house of that son, in Sherburne, Massachusetts. This was probably the only existing copy of the work. The loss of it is a calamity to early American history.

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[1] Archæol. Am. II. 461–462.

CHAPTER VII.

NEW ENGLAND: DESCRIPTIONS OF NATURE AND PEOPLE IN AMERICA.

I.—Sensitiveness of the first Americans to the peculiar phenomena of the new world.

II.—"Journal" of Bradford and Winslow—First contact of the Pilgrims with America—Gropings—American thunder—Indian visits—An Indian king at home—Winslow's letter—His "Good News from New England"—History as cultivated by the Indians—Men who are not called to be colonists.

III.—Francis Higginson, churchman, dissenter, immigrant—His "True Relation"—His "New England's Plantation"—Pictures of sea and land—The bright side of things in America.

IV.—William Wood—His "New England's Prospect"—His uncommon literary ability—Analysis of his book—His defence of the honesty of travellers—His powers of description—Merit of his verses—Mirthfulness—Wolves, humming-birds, fishes—Eloquent and playful sketches of Indians.

V.—John Josselyn—His kindred—No lover of the New England Puritans—His habits in America—A seventeenth century naturalist in our woods—His "New England's Rarities Discovered"—His "Two Voyages to New England"—The White Hills—His true value as a reporter of natural history—Generous gifts to the credulous reader—His friendly attitude toward the unknown.

I.

A DELIGHTFUL group of writings belonging to our earliest age is made up of those which preserve for us, in the very words of the men themselves, the curiosity, the awe, the bewilderment, the fresh delight, with which the American Fathers came face to face for the first time with the various forms of nature and of life in the new world. We have already seen examples of this class of writings produced by the early men of Virginia; and among the founders of New England there was no lack of the same

sensitiveness to the vast, picturesque, and novel aspects of nature which they encountered upon the sea and the land, in their first journeys hither. The evidence of this fact is scattered thick through all their writings, in letters, sermons, histories, poems; while there remain several books, written by them immediately after their arrival here, describing in the first glow of elated feeling the vision that unfolded itself before them, of the new realms of existence, the "vast and empty chaos,"[1] upon which they were entering.

II.

The first of these books consists of a journal[2] kept by two renowned passengers upon the Mayflower, William Bradford and Edward Winslow, from the ninth of November, 1620, the day on which they caught their first glimpse of American land, until the return to England of the good ship Fortune, more than thirteen months afterward. Of course, in a book of this kind, made up of extemporized jottings, we ought not to look for careful literary workmanship; and yet, the deliberation and the conscientiousness of the Pilgrim character are stamped upon every line of it. It has the charm of utter sincerity, the effortless grace that we might expect in the language of noble-minded men casting their eyes for the first time, and with unhackneyed enthusiasm, upon the face of a new universe.

"After many difficulties in boisterous storms, at length, by God's providence . . . we espied land. . . . And the appearance of it much comforted us, especially seeing so goodly a land, and wooded to the brink of the sea."[3] Coming round "the spiral bending" of the outermost point of Cape Cod, they found themselves suddenly in "a

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[1] Robert Cushman, in Young, "Chron. Pil." 245.

[2] Long known under the ugly name of "Mourt's Relation," so called probably through a typographical error in the first edition. Reprinted in Young, "Chron. Pil." 109–229.

[3] Young, "Chron. Pil." 117.

good harbor and pleasant bay," "wherein a thousand sail of ships may safely ride."[1] Upon land "there was the greatest store of fowl that ever we saw. And every day we saw whales playing hard by us, of which in that place, if we had instruments and means to take them, we might have made a very rich return; which to our great grief we wanted."[2] Some of the pioneers going on shore for the purpose of discovering a place of habitation, they wondered at the density of the forests, and at the scarcity of the inhabitants. "We marched through boughs and bushes, and under hills and valleys, which tore our very armor in pieces, and yet could meet with none" of the inhabitants "nor their houses, nor find any fresh water." At last, "about ten o'clock we came into a deep valley, full of brush, wood-gaile, and long grass, through which we found little paths or tracks; and there we saw deer, and found springs of fresh water, of which we were heartily glad, and sat us down and drunk our first New England water, with as much delight as ever we drunk drink in all our lives."[3] "We went ranging up and down till the sun began to draw low, and then we hasted out of the woods, that we might come to our shallop, which . . . we espied a great way off, and called them to come unto us. . . . They were exceeding glad to see us. . . . So being both weary and faint, for we had eaten nothing all that day, we fell to make our rendezvous and get firewood. . . . By that time we had done, and our shallop come to us, it was within night; and we fed upon such victuals as we had, and betook us to our rest, after we had set our watch. About midnight we heard a great and hideous cry; and our sentinels called 'Arm! Arm!' So we bestirred ourselves, and shot off a couple of muskets, and the noise ceased. We concluded that it was a company of wolves or foxes; for one told us he had heard such a noise in Newfoundland. About five o'clock in the morning we began to be stir-

[1] Young, "Chron. Pil." 118. [2] Ibid. 119. [3] Ibid. 128–129.

ring. . . . After prayer we prepared ourselves for breakfast and for a journey; and it being now the twilight in the morning, it was thought meet to carry the things down to the shallop. . . . As it fell out, the water not being high enough, they laid the things down upon the shore and came up to breakfast. Anon, all upon a sudden, we heard a great and a strange cry, which we knew to be the same voices, though they varied their notes. One of our company, being abroad, came running in, and cried, 'They are men! Indians! Indians!' and withal their arrows came flying amongst us. Our men ran out with all speed to recover their arms. . . . In the meantime, Captain Miles Standish, having a snaphance ready, made a shot, and after him another. After they two had shot, other two of us were ready; but he wished us not to shoot till we could take aim, for we knew not what need we should have. . . . Our care was no less for the shallop. . . . We called unto them to know how it was with them; and they answered 'Well! Well!' every one, and 'be of good courage!' . . . The cry of our enemies was dreadful. . . . Their note was after this manner, '*Woach, woach, ha ha hach woach.*' . . . There was a lusty man, and no whit less valiant, who was thought to be their captain, stood behind a tree within half a musket-shot of us, and there let his arrows fly at us. He was seen to shoot three arrows, which were all avoided; for he at whom the first arrow was aimed, saw it, and stooped down, and it flew over him. The rest were avoided also. He stood three shots of a musket. At length, one took, as he said, full aim at him; after which he gave an extraordinary cry, and away they went all. We followed them about a quarter of a mile. . . . Then we shouted all together two several times, and shot off a couple of muskets and so returned. This we did that they might see we were not afraid of them, nor discouraged. Thus it pleased God to vanquish our enemies and give us deliverance."[1]

[1] Young, "Chron. Pil." 154–158.

On Saturday, the third of March, "the birds sang in the woods most pleasantly. At one of the clock it thundered, which was the first we heard in that country. It was strong and great claps, but short; but after an hour it rained very sadly till midnight."[1]

On Friday, the sixteenth of March, "we determined to conclude of the military orders, which we had begun to consider of before. . . . And whilst we were busied hereabout, we were interrupted again; for there presented himself a savage, which caused an alarm. He very boldly came all alone, and along the houses, straight to the rendezvous; where we intercepted him, not suffering him to go in. . . . He saluted us in English and bade us 'welcome.' . . . He was a man free in speech, so far as he could express his mind, and of a seemly carriage. We questioned him of many things; he was the first savage we could meet withal. He said he was not of these parts, but of Morattiggon, and one of the sagamores or lords thereof. . . . He discoursed of the whole country, and of every province, and of their sagamores, and their number of men, and strength. The wind beginning to rise a little, we cast a horseman's coat about him; for he was stark naked, only a leather about his waist, with a fringe about a span long or little more. He had a bow and two arrows. . . . He was a tall, straight man, the hair of his head black, long behind, only short before, none on his face at all. He asked some beer, but we gave him strong water, and biscuit, and butter, and cheese, and pudding, and a piece of mallard; all which he liked well. . . . All the afternoon we spent in communication with him. We would gladly have been rid of him at night, but he was not willing to go this night. . . . We lodged him that night at Stephen Hopkins's house, and watched him."[2]

On the twenty-second of March, the Pilgrims received a visit from the great sagamore, Massasoit. "After saluta-

[1] Young, "Chron. Pil." 181–182. [2] Ibid. 182–185.

tions, our governor kissing his hand, the king kissed him; and so they sat down. The governor called for some strong water, and drunk to him; and he drunk a great draught, that made him sweat all the while after. . . . All the while he sat by the governor, he trembled for fear. In his person he is a very lusty man, in his best years, an able body, grave of countenance, and spare of speech; in his attire little or nothing differing from the rest of his followers, only in a great chain of white bone beads about his neck. . . . The king had in his bosom, hanging in a string, a great long knife. He marvelled much at our trumpet, and some of his men would sound it as well as they could. Samoset and Squanto, they staid all night with us; and the king and all his men lay all night in the woods, not above half an English mile from us, and all their wives and women with them. That night we kept good watch; but there was no appearance of danger.[1]

"For the temper of the air here," writes Edward Winslow, in a letter appended to the journal from which we have been quoting, "it agreeth well with that in England; and if there be any difference at all, this is somewhat hotter in summer. Some think it to be colder in winter; but I cannot out of experience so say. The air is very clear, and not foggy, as hath been reported. I never in my life remember a more seasonable year than we have here enjoyed; and if we have once but kine, horses, and sheep, I make no question but men might live as contented here as in any part of the world. . . . The country wanteth only industrious men to employ; for it would grieve your hearts if, as I, you had seen so many miles together by goodly rivers uninhabited; and withal, to consider those parts of the world wherein you live to be even greatly burthened with abundance of people."[2]

Thus, with words of happy import, do these earliest Americans close up the story of their first year in their

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[1] Young, "Chron. Pil." 193–195. [2] Ibid. 233–234.

new home; and three years afterward, in 1624, Edward Winslow had a second report to make, which was published in London under the title of "Good News from New England."[1]

He takes up the narrative at the very point where the previous report had dropped it, and carries it forward in luminous and spirited style down to September, 1623. It is a story of the griefs and perils and escapes of the young settlement, of their various encounters, in amity and in enmity, with mean red men and meaner white ones; of the interior administration of the little commonwealth, and of its steady advancement through all obstructions into solid security; above all else, it is a description of the country, with reference to its desirableness as the seat of a new English community. Winslow was a brave man, most expert in dealing with the Indians, and was several times sent upon embassies to them; and his book abounds in vivid and amusing descriptions of these savages, and of the manner of their lives. In one place, for example, he gives this account of their mode of preserving the memory of historical events: "Instead of records and chronicles, they take this course. Where any remarkable act is done, in memory of it, either in the place or by some pathway near adjoining, they make a round hole in the ground, about a foot deep, and as much over; which when others passing by behold, they inquire the cause and occasion of the same, which being once known, they are careful to acquaint all men, as occasion serveth, therewith; and lest such holes should be filled or grown up by any accident, as men pass by, they will oft renew the same; by which means many things of great antiquity are fresh in memory. So that as a man travelleth, if he can understand his guide, his journey will be the less tedious, by reason of the many historical discourses [which] will be related unto him."[2] Perhaps nothing in all the book is more graphic or enter-

[1] Printed in Young, "Chron. Pil." 270-375. [2] Ibid. 367.

taining than his description of a journey which in the company of "one Master John Hamden, a gentleman of London, who then wintered with us," he made for the medical relief of Massasoit.[1]

The conclusion of the work is a racy and vigorous admonition addressed to Englishmen who might meditate emigration to America, and warning them against the danger of entering upon that grim business without sufficient consideration of its inevitable tasks and pains: "I write not these things to dissuade any that shall seriously, upon due examination, set themselves to further the glory of God and the honor of our country, in so worthy an enterprise, but rather to discourage such as with too great lightness undertake such courses; who peradventure strain themselves and their friends for their passage thither, and are no sooner there, than seeing their foolish imagination made void, are at their wit's end, and would give ten times so much for their return, if they could procure it; and out of such discontented passions and humors, spare not to lay that imputation upon the country, and others, which themselves deserve. As, for example, I have heard some complain of others for their large reports of New England, and yet, because they must drink water and want many delicates they here enjoyed, could presently return with their mouths full of clamors. And can any be so simple as to conceive that the fountains should stream forth wine or beer, or the woods and rivers be like butchers' shops or fishmongers' stalls, where they might have things taken to their hands? If thou canst not live without such things, and hast no means to procure the one, and will not take pains for the other, nor hast ability to employ others for thee, rest where thou art; for, as a proud heart, a dainty tooth, a beggar's purse, and an idle hand, be here[2] intoler-

[1] Young, "Chron. Pil." 313–323.

[2] In England, where the concluding paragraphs of the book appear to have been written.

able, so that person that hath these qualities there, is much more abominable. If, therefore, God hath given thee a heart to undertake such courses, upon such grounds as bear thee out in all difficulties, namely, his glory as a principal, and all other outward good things but as accessories, . . . then thou wilt with true comfort and thankfulness receive the least of his mercies; whereas on the contrary, men deprive themselves of much happiness, being senseless of greater blessings, and through prejudice smother up the love and bounty of God; whose name be ever glorified in us, and by us, now and evermore. Amen."[1]

III.

Among the Argonauts of the first decade of New England colonization there was perhaps no braver or more exquisite spirit than Francis Higginson, a graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge, who, entering the ministry of the Church of England, soon became noted for his eloquence, and who, turning away from very brilliant prospects of promotion, became a resolute non-conformist, and finally accepted the office of religious teacher to the little pioneer community of Salem, in Massachusetts. It was in April, 1629, that this saintly and gifted man, with his wife and eight little children, sailed away from England, on the Talbot, "a good and strong ship," carrying "above a hundred planters, six goats, five great pieces of ordnance, with meal, oatmeal, pease, and all manner of munition and provision for the plantation for a twelvemonth."[2]

Of this journey over the Atlantic, then a thing of great novelty and risk, Francis Higginson kept a journal, which he promptly sent back to England, and which was circulated in manuscript under the title of "A True Relation of the last Voyage to New England, declaring all circum-

[1] Young, "Chron. Pil." 373-374.

[2] F. Higginson's "Journal," in Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 213-238.

stances, with the manner of the passage we had by sea, and what manner of country and inhabitants we found when we came to land, and what is the present state and condition of the English people that are there already; faithfully recorded, according to the very truth, for the satisfaction of very many of my loving friends, who have earnestly requested to be truly certified in these things." Arriving at Salem on the twenty-ninth of June, the author passed the next three months in getting established in his new home, and in making himself acquainted with the youthful-seeming world he had come to live in. The results of his observations were compressed into a little book, entitled "New England's Plantation," giving a "description of the commodities and discommodities of that country." This work was instantly printed in London; and so eager was the thirst of the English people for information concerning their recent settlements in New England, that three editions of the book were called for within a single year. In a little more than thirteen months from his arrival in America, however, Francis Higginson died, in the prime of his life, and on the threshold of a great career.

Upon the title-page of his first book there is the hint of an apology to any "curious critic" who may look into it "for exactness of phrases;" and yet, unlabored as is the composition of both his books, we find in them a delicate felicity of expression, and a quiet, imaginative picturesqueness. Thus, for Wednesday, May thirteenth, he writes: "The wind still holding easterly, we came as far as the Land's End, in the utmost part of Cornwall, and so left our dear native soil of England behind us; and sailing about ten leagues further, we passed the isles of Scilly, and launched the same day a great way into the main ocean. And now my wife and other passengers began to feel the tossing waves of the western sea."[1]

Again, under the date of May twenty-seventh, he gives

[1] Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 221.

this forcible description of a storm: "About noon there arose a south wind which increased more and more, so that it seemed to us that are landmen, a sore and terrible storm; for the wind blew mightily, the rain fell vehemently, the sea roared, and the waves tossed us horribly; besides, it was fearful dark, and the mariner's mate was afraid, and noise on the other side, with their running here and there, loud crying one to another to pull at this and that rope. The waves poured themselves over the ship, that the two boats were filled with water. . . . But this lasted not many hours, after which it became a calmish day."[1] What pathos and simple beauty are in these words, which were written for Wednesday, the twenty-fourth of June: "This day we had all a clear and comfortable sight of America."[2]

Two days afterward the author wrote the following sentences, so vivid and real in their descriptiveness, that they enable us to enjoy the very luxury of drawing near to America and of beholding it with the eyes of the Fathers themselves: "Friday a foggy morning, but after clear, and wind calm. We saw many schools of mackerel, infinite multitudes on every side of our ship. The sea was abundantly stored with rockweed and yellow flowers, like gillyflowers. By noon we were within three leagues of Cape Ann; and as we sailed along the coasts, we saw every hill and dale and every island full of gay woods and high trees. The nearer we came to the shore, the more flowers in abundance, sometimes scattered abroad, sometimes joined in sheets nine or ten yards long, which we supposed to be brought from the low meadows by the tide. Now, what with fine woods and green trees by land, and these yellow flowers painting the sea, made us all desirous to see our new paradise of New England, whence we saw such forerunning signals of fertility afar off."[3] On Monday, the

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[1] Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 225. [2] Ibid. 231.
[3] Ibid. 232–233.

twenty-ninth of June, "as we passed along, it was wonderful to behold so many islands, replenished with thick wood and high trees, and many fair, green, pastures. . . . We rested that night with glad and thankful hearts that God had put an end to our long and tedious journey through the greatest sea in the world. . . . Our passage was both pleasurable and profitable. For we received instruction and delight in beholding the wonders of the Lord in the deep waters, and sometimes seeing the sea round us appearing with a terrible countenance, and, as it were, full of high hills and deep valleys; and sometimes it appeared as a most plain and even meadow. And, ever and anon, we saw divers kinds of fishes sporting in the great waters, great grampuses and huge whales, going by companies, and puffing up water-streams. Those that love their own chimney-corner, and dare not go beyond their own town's end, shall never have the honor to see these wonderful works of Almighty God."[1]

In describing New England with reference to its fitness as the seat of an English commonwealth, the author arranges his facts, rather quaintly, under the topics of "the four elements—earth, water, air, and fire." All his pages are full of sunshine, and the fragrance of flowers, and the gladness of nature in New England during the balmy season in which he came to it. Indeed, he was accused by some who came afterward, of having given too attractive a picture of the country; but for this he was hardly to blame. When he wrote, he had seen only the season of roses: no wonder that his descriptions were rosy. After a voyage of six weeks upon the ocean, any land seems good, much more a delicious, flowery summer-land; and Francis Higginson wrote in the first flush of excitement at being on shore, in a bounteous realm, in an exhilarating new life. It seems to him a paradise regained. All things are delightful. He even exults in the domestic felicity of having

[1] Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 234–237.

"already a quart of milk for a penny,"[1] and in having candles of "the wood of the pine tree cloven in two little slices something thin, which . . . burn as clear as a torch."[2] Concerning the climate of the country, he declared that "a sup of New England's air is better than a whole draught of Old England's ale."[3] He was not long in making a study of the Indians, whom in one passage he describes with great zest, even weaving into his account a stroke of gentle raillery at a certain English fashion then prevalent, and very distasteful to the Puritans. The Indians "are a tall and strong-limbed people. Their colors are tawny. . . . Their hair is generally black, and cut before, like our gentlewomen, and one lock longer than the rest, much like to our gentlemen, which fashion, I think, came from hence into England."[4] But best of all, "we have here plenty of preaching, and diligent catechising, with strict and careful exercise. . . . And thus we doubt not but God will be with us; and if God be with us, who can be against us?"[5]

IV.

A very sprightly and masterful specimen of descriptive literature, embodying the results of precise observation directed toward the topography, climate, and productions of the country, is "New England's Prospect,"[6] published in London in 1634, and written by William Wood, whose residence in America is supposed to have begun five years

[1] Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 245. [2] Ibid. 254.
[3] Ibid. 252. [4] Ibid. 256–257.
[5] Ibid. 259. Some of the pleasantest portions of these writings of Francis Higginson have lately been made more accessible by their publication in Thomas Wentworth Higginson's "Book of American Explorers." 341–355. An early brochure, which has acquired considerable note in our time, is "Good News from New England," London, 1648, reprinted in 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. I. 195–218; a work of no little vigor, also of considerable antiquarian value, but in literary form inexpressibly crude. No clue to the authorship of it has yet been discovered.
[6] Reprinted by the Prince Society, Boston, 1865.

before that date. It will not be easy for us to give a more felicitous account of the book than it gives of itself, when, upon its old title-page, it assures us that it is indeed "a true, lively, and experimental description" of the region that it treats of. The author had attained the fine art of packing his pages full of the most exact delineation of facts, without pressing the life and juice out of them; and, besides the extraordinary raciness and vivacity of his manner, he has an elegance of touch by no means common in the prose of his contemporaries. His style, indeed, is that of a man of genuine literary culture, and has the tone and flavor of the best Elizabethan prose-writers; almost none of the crabbedness of the sermon-makers and pamphleteers of his own day. There are dainty strokes of beauty in his sentences; a forceful imaginative vigor; gayety, and good-hearted sarcasm; all going to make up a book of genial descriptions of nature such as Izaak Walton must have delighted in, if perchance his placid eye ever fell upon it. The book is broken into two parts, the first being a description of the country, the second an account of its Indian inhabitants. Under the first division, we have in twelve chapters a sketch of the geographical features of New England; of the seasons; of the climate, "with the suitableness of it to English bodies for health and sickness;" of the soil; "of the herbs, fruits, woods, waters, and minerals;" "of the beasts that live on the land," or in the water, or both; finally, of the colonies already established there, and of the best preparations to be made by those who intended to remove into the new world. The second division of the work contains twenty chapters, all relating to the Indian tribes of New England; their places of abode; their apparel, ornaments, paintings; their food; their personal characteristics, such as friendship, fortitude, intellectual condition; their politics; their worship; their wars, diversions, domestic customs, and means of livelihood.

Thus the book has a wide range of topics and a multitude of details; but it moves easily through them all, with

an alert and thorough treatment, not once blundering out of the straight path or lapsing into dulness. In the preface, the author has a spirited passage avowing that in all his statements he had been careful of the truth, and wittily defending the reputation of travellers against the calumnies of those home-keeping souls who denounce as false whatever is beyond the petty sweep of their own horizons. "I would be loath to broach any thing which may puzzle thy belief, and so justly draw upon myself that unjust aspersion commonly laid on travellers; of whom many say, 'They may lie by authority, because none can control them;' which proverb had surely his original from the sleepy belief of many a home-bred dormouse, who comprehends not either the rarity or possibility of those things he sees not; to whom the most classic relations seem riddles and paradoxes; of whom it may be said, as once of Diogenes, that because he circled himself in the circumstance of a tub, he therefore contemned the port and palace of Alexander, which he knew not. So there is many a tub-brained cynic, who because anything stranger than ordinary is too large for the strait hoops of his apprehension, he peremptorily concludes that it is a lie. But I decline this sort of thick-witted readers, and dedicate the mite of my endeavors to my more credulous, ingenious, and less censorious countrymen, for whose sake I undertook this work. . . . Thus, thou mayest, in two or three hours' travel over a few leaves, see and know that which cost him that writ it, years, and travel over sea and land, before he knew it."

It is a discovery soon made by us, as we turn over the pages of this writer, that in a book in which description needs to be the principal thing, his style is most happily descriptive. He seems to have the very gift of picture-making, describing objects so well that, as the Arabs say, the ear is converted into the eye. For example, having to tell us of Massachusetts Bay, he lets us look at it for ourselves. It "is both safe, spacious, and deep, free from

such cockling seas as run upon the coast of Ireland, and in the channels of England. . . . The mariners . . . may behold the two capes embracing their welcome ships in their arms, which thrust themselves out into the sea in form of a half-moon, the surrounding shore being high, and showing many white cliffs in a most pleasant prospect. . . . This harbor is made by a great company of islands, whose high cliffs shoulder out the boisterous seas."[1]

Another literary trait of the author, which he shares with many of the writers of his period, is that of sprinkling verses along the landscape of his prose; and his verses have this singularity, that they are often of considerable poetic merit. In giving a description of the forest trees of New England, he compresses a multitude of particulars into these terse lines, in which the literary aptness and even imaginative force of his epithets are as striking as is their scientific precision:

"Trees both in hills and plains in plenty be;
The long-lived Oak, and mournful Cypress-tree;
Sky-towering Pines, and Chestnuts coated rough,
The lasting Cedar, with the Walnut tough;
The rosin-dropping Fir, for masts in use;
The boatmen seek for oars, light, neat-grown Spruce;
The brittle Ash, the ever-trembling Asps,
The broad-spread Elm, whose concave harbors wasps;
The water-spongy Alder, good for naught;
Small Eldern, by the Indian fletchers sought;
The knotty Maple, pallid Birch, Hawthorns;
The horn-bound tree, that to be cloven scorns,
Which from the tender vine oft takes his spouse,
Who twines embracing arms about his boughs.
Within this Indian orchard fruits be some:
The ruddy Cherry, and the jetty Plum,
Snake-murthering Hazel, with sweet Saxifrage,
Whose spurs, in beer, allays hot fever's rage.
The dyer's Sumach, with more trees there be,
That are both good to use, and rare to see."[2]

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[1] "New England's Prospect," 2–3.

[2] Ibid. 18.

In his chapters on animals are many paragraphs illustrating an amusing quaintness and quiet mirthfulness of tone, as well as the author's power of condensed and graphic description in verse: "Having related unto you the pleasant situation of the country, the healthfulness of the climate, the nature of the soil, with his vegetatives and other commodities, it will not be amiss to inform you of such irrational creatures as are daily bred and continually nourished in this country, which do much conduce to the well being of the inhabitants, affording not only meat for the belly, but clothing for the back. The beasts be as followeth:

> The kingly Lion, and the strong-armed Bear,
> The large-limbed Mooses, with the tripping Deer;
> Quill-darting Porcupines and Raccoons be
> Castled in the hollow of an aged tree;
> The skipping Squirrel, Rabbit, purblind Hare,
> Immurëd in the selfsame castle are;
> Lest red-eyed Ferrets, wily Foxes should
> Them undermine, if rampired but with mould;
> The grim-faced Ounce, and ravenous, howling Wolf
> Whose meagre paunch sucks like a swallowing gulf;
> Black-glistering Otters, and rich-coated Beaver,
> The civet-scented Musquash smelling ever.

Concerning lions I will not say that I ever saw any myself; but some affirm that they have seen a lion at Cape Ann, which is not above six leagues from Boston; some likewise being lost in woods have heard such terrible roarings as have made them much aghast; which must either be devils or lions; there being no other creatures which use to roar saving bears, which have not such a terrible kind of roaring. Besides, Plymouth men have traded for lions' skins in former times."[1] "The Porcupine is a small thing not much unlike a Hedgehog; something bigger, who stands upon his guard, and proclaims a 'Noli me tangere' to man and beast that shall approach too near

[1] "New England's Prospect," 21.

him, darting his quills into their legs and hides."[1] "The beasts of offence be Skunks, Ferrets, Foxes, whose impudence sometimes drives them to the good-wives' hen roost to fill their paunch."[2] "The Oldwives be a fowl that never leave tattling day or night; something bigger than a duck."[3]

Altogether the most remarkable literary quality of this writer is shown in his delineation of objects in natural history: he has in these an extraordinary union of comprehensiveness, minute accuracy, brevity, and pictorial vividness. Thus, in his account of wolves and hummingbirds are passages that indicate in the author an uncommon power of close and definite observation, together with an easy command of the words that are at once nicely, concisely, and poetically descriptive. Wolves "be made much like a mongrel, being big-boned, lank-paunched, deep-breasted, having a thick neck and head, prick ears, and long snout, with dangerous teeth, long staring hair, and a great bush-tail. It is thought of many that our English mastiffs might be too hard for them; but it is no such matter, for they care no more for an ordinary mastiff, than an ordinary mastiff cares for a cur; many good dogs have been spoiled with them. Once a fair greyhound hearing them at their howlings, run out to chide them, who was torn to pieces before he could be rescued. One of them makes no more bones to run away with a pig than a dog to run away with a marrow bone. . . . Late at night and early in the morning they set up their howlings, and call their companies together at night to hunt, at morning to sleep; in a word they be the greatest inconveniency the country hath, both for matter of damage to private men in particular, and the whole country in general."[4] "The Humbird is one of the wonders of the country, being no bigger than a hornet, yet hath all the dimensions of a bird, as bill and wings, with quills, spider-

[1] "New England's Prospect," 24. [2] Ibid. 25. [3] Ibid. 34. [4] Ibid. 26–27.

like legs, small claws. For color she is as glorious as the rainbow; as she flies she makes a little humming noise like a humblebee: wherefore she is called the Humbird."[1]

"Having done with these," he says, "let me lead you from the land to the sea, to view what commodities may come from thence;"[2] and in the course of this description, he mentions with his usual excellence of apt epithets:

> "The king of waters, the sea-shouldering Whale;
> The snuffing Grampus, with the oily Seal;
> The storm-presaging Porpus; Herring-Hog;
> Line-shearing Shark, the Catfish, and Sea-Dog;
> . . . . . .
> The stately Bass, old Neptune's fleeting post
> That tides it out and in from sea to coast."[3]

It was not the author's plan to deal at any length with the history and social development of the colonies established in New England; yet he does not altogether pass them over, nor does he forget the needs of those in the mother-land who might be considering the project of coming to America. He speaks sarcastically of the ignorant questions often asked in England concerning the new land, as, "whether the sun shines there or no;"[4] and of the "groundless calumniations" of those who had come to the country with fantastic and impossible notions of what was to be found there, and had of course abandoned it in disgust: "I have myself heard some say that they heard it was a rich land, a brave country; but when they came there they could see nothing but a few canvas booths and old houses, supposing at the first to have found walled towns, fortifications and cornfields, as if towns could have built themselves, or cornfields have grown of themselves without the husbandry of man. These men, missing of their expectations, returned home and railed against the

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[1] "New England's Prospect," 31.
[2] Ibid. 35.
[3] Ibid. 36.
[4] Ibid. 61.

country."[1] The second part of the book is devoted to the Indians, and is written, as the author says, "in a more light and facetious style, . . . because their carriage and behavior hath afforded more matter of mirth and laughter, than gravity and wisdom; and therefore I have inserted many passages of mirth concerning them, to spice the rest of my more serious discourse and to make it more pleasant."[2] But the author's merry eye, never failing to catch a glimpse of whatever is amusing, is likewise alert for whatever is instructive; and the really fine and wise sketch which he has given of the various savage tribes of New England, is not likely to be scorned by us, even though he may have committed the crime of paving the highway of knowledge with entertainment. His study of the Indians seems to have embraced not only their habits in this world, but their notions about the world to come; and in his chapter on "their deaths, burials, and mourning," we find these nimble and affluent sentences, which, besides giving us considerable amusing information, reproduce for us the very manner of the best Elizabethan prose: "Although the Indians be of lusty and healthful bodies, not experimentally knowing the catalogue of those health-wasting diseases which are incident to other countries, . . . but spin out the thread of their days to a fair length, numbering three score, four score, some a hundred years, before the world's universal summoner cite them to the craving grave; but the date of their life expired, and death's arrestment seizing upon them, all hope of recovery being past, then to behold and hear their throbbing sobs and deep-fetched sighs, their grief-wrung hands, and tear-bedewed cheeks, their doleful cries, would draw tears from adamantine eyes, that be but spectators of their mournful obsequies. The glut of their grief being passed, they commit the corpse of their deceased friends to the ground, over whose grave is for a long time spent many a briny tear, deep groan

[1] "New England's Prospect," 52. [2] Ibid. "To the Reader."

and Irish-like howlings. . . . These are the mourners without hope; yet do they hold the immortality of the never-dying soul, that it shall pass to the South-West Elysium, concerning which their Indian faith jumps much with the Turkish Alcoran, holding it to be a kind of paradise, wherein they shall everlastingly abide, solacing themselves in odoriferous gardens, fruitful cornfields, green meadows, bathing their tawny hides in the cool streams of pleasant rivers, and shelter themselves from heat and cold in the sumptuous palaces framed by the skill of Nature's curious contrivement; concluding that neither care nor pain shall molest them, but that Nature's bounty will administer all things with a voluntary contribution from the overflowing storehouse of their Elysian hospital."[1]

So vigilant an observer as was this author, would not be likely to let slip any trait that might illustrate the grotesque and droll effects wrought by the contact of English culture with the mental childhood of the Indians. Nothing in this kind has ever ministered more to the white man's mirth than the impression made upon the savages by our improvements in the arts, which of course seemed to them to be things enormous, superhuman, and dreadful: "These Indians being strangers to arts and sciences, and being unacquainted with the inventions that are common to a civilized people, are ravished with admiration at the first view of any such sight. They took the first ship they saw for a walking island, the mast to be a tree, the sail white clouds, and the discharging of ordnance for lightning and thunder, which did much trouble them; but this thunder being over, and this moving island steadied with an anchor, they manned out their canoes to go and pick strawberries there; but being saluted by the way with a broadside, they cried out 'what much hoggery,' 'so big walk,' and 'so big speak,' and 'by and by kill,' which caused them to turn back, not daring to approach till they

[1] "New England's Prospect," 104–105.

were sent for. They do much extol and wonder at the English for their strange inventions, especially for a windmill, which in their esteem was little less than the world's wonder, for the strangeness of his whisking motion and the sharp teeth biting the corn (as they term it) into such small pieces. They were loath at the first to come near to his long arms, or to abide in so tottering a tabernacle, though now they dare go anywhere so far as they have an English guide."[1]

His chapter on the Aberginians, a tribe of savages renowned for their stalwart and superb physical proportions, furnishes us with another instance of his remarkable gift of concentrated, exact, and vivid description. They are "between five or six foot high, straight-bodied, strongly composed, smooth-skinned, merry-countenanced, of complexion something more swarthy than Spaniards, black-haired, high-foreheaded, black-eyed, out-nosed, broad-shouldered, brawny-armed, long- and slender-handed, out-breasted, small-waisted, lank-bellied, well-thighed, flat-kneed, handsome-grown legs, and small feet. In a word, take them when the blood brisks in their veins, when the flesh is on their backs, and marrow in their bones, when they frolic in their antique deportments and Indian postures, and they are more amiable to behold (though only in Adam's livery) than many a compounded fantastic in the newest fashion."[2] "But a sagamore with a humbird in his ear for a pendant, a black hawk on his occiput for his plume, mowhackees for his gold chain, good store of wampompeage begirting his loins, his bow in his hand, his quiver at his back, with six naked Indian spatterlashes at his heels for his guard, thinks himself little inferior to the great Cham; he will not stick to say, he is all one with King Charles. He thinks he can blow down castles with his breath, and conquer kingdoms with his conceit."[3]

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[1] "New England's Prospect," 87. [2] Ibid. 70. [3] Ibid. 74.

V.

A writer of more pronounced scientific intentions, though of far less literary skill, was John Josselyn, who, belonging to an ancient and aristocratic family in England, had the distinction of being able to subscribe his name with the proud affix, "Gentleman." His father, Sir Thomas Josselyn, of Kent, was an associate of Sir Ferdinando Gorges in schemes of American colonization; his brother was that Henry Josselyn, who, from about the year 1634 onward for forty years, was a leading land-holder and magistrate in the province of Maine, and who, in life-long contests with white men and Indians, displayed an unslumbering activity of courage and of hate,—a characteristic exactly touched by Whittier in a single vivid line of Mogg Megone—

"Grey Jocelyn's eye is never sleeping."

John Josselyn, the author, was twice an inhabitant of this country. He came first in 1638, remaining only fifteen months; he came again in 1663, and remained eight years: in both cases passing the most of his time on his brother's plantation at Scarborough. In connection with his first arrival in Boston, he mentions a fact that gives us a pleasant glimpse of the intellectual exchanges already begun between the men of books in America and the men of books in England: he states that he first paid his respects to "Mr. Winthrop, the governor," and that he next called upon the great pulpit-orator, John Cotton, to whom he "delivered from Mr. Francis Quarles, the poet, the translation of the 16th, 25th, 51st, 88th, 113th, and 137th Psalms, into English metre, for his approbation."[1] Though his family in England appear to have been attached to the Puritan party, he himself certainly had little sympathy with the Puritans of New England, concerning whom he

[1] "Two Voyages to N. E.," 225-226, reprinted in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. III. 211-354.

in one place frees his mind, with a refreshing copiousness of frank words. Their leading men, he tells us, "are damnable rich, . . . inexplicably covetous and proud: they receive your gifts but as an homage or tribute due to their transcendency. . . . The chiefest objects of discipline, true religion, and morality, they want; some are of a linsey-woolsey disposition, . . . all like Ethiopians, white in the teeth only; full of ludification, and injurious dealing, and cruelty."[1]

There is no evidence that he engaged in any kind of business in America. He was probably a bachelor; and finding a comfortable home on his brother's estate, he had leisure to indulge his love of reading and particularly his fondness for researches in natural history. He made it his ambition, as he informs us, "to discover the natural, physical, and chirurgical rarities of this new-found world."[2] He appears to have wandered at his will in the forests and on the mountains of Maine, to have dropped his hook in many waters, and to have explored the islands along the coast, everywhere soliciting nature to deliver up to him her mysteries. Some of these mysteries, indeed, did not consent to be delivered up passively to the prying stranger, even for the advancement of science among mankind; as was made apparent, for example, in his somewhat too zealous investigation of that uneasy Americanism, a hornet's nest: "In the afternoon I walked into the woods . . . , and happening into a fine broad walk, . . . I wandered till I chanced to spy a fruit, as I thought, like a pine-apple plated with scales. It was as big as the crown of a woman's hat. I made bold to step unto it, with an intent to have gathered it. No sooner had I touched it, but hundreds of wasps were about me. At last I cleared myself from them, . . . but by the time I was come into the house, . . . they hardly knew me but by my garments."[3]

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[1] "Two Voyages to N. E." 331. [2] "New England's Rarities," 35.
[3] "Two Voyages to N. E." 231–232.

This grim practical joke of the wasps at the expense of the learned naturalist, which must have long supplied food for bucolic mirth among the woodmen of New England, is deftly used by Longfellow in his "Tragedy of John Endicott," when he makes the troubled inn-keeper of Boston, Samuel Cole, exclaim:

> "I feel like Master Josselyn when he found
> The hornet's nest, and thought it some strange fruit,
> Until the seeds came out, and then he dropped it." [1]

It is as a naturalist, and as the writer of two books embodying the results of his observations in that capacity, that John Josselyn has a place in our literary annals. He appears indeed to have been a man of some general learning. He quotes Pliny, Lucan, Isidore, and Paracelsus; all his Biblical citations are from the Vulgate; he brings in a proverb in the Italian; and among the writers of his own country, he has references to Drayton, Ben Jonson, Sir John Davies, Sylvester, George Sandys, Captain John Smith, and to Charles the First; to the last of whom, as the supposed author of "Eikon Basilike," he alludes in the sympathetic cant of the Restoration, as "the royal martyr." John Josselyn's first book, entitled "New England's Rarities Discovered in Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Serpents, and Plants of that Country," was published in London in 1672; his second book, considerably larger than the first, and entitled "An Account of Two Voyages to New England," was published in the same place in 1674.

Although his main purpose in these books was to give an account of American productions in natural history, he did not altogether leave out descriptions of the country in general. Thus he speaks of "a ridge of mountains . . . known by the name of the White Mountains, upon which lieth snow all the year, and is a landmark twenty miles off at sea." [2] One of the highest of these mountains is

[1] "New England Tragedies," 35. [2] "New England's Rarities," 35–36.

"called the Sugar Loaf, . . . a rude heap of massy stones piled one upon another. . . . From this rocky hill you may see the whole country round about: it is far above the lower clouds, and from hence we beheld a vapor, like a great pillar, drawn up by the sunbeams out of a great lake or pond into the air, where it was formed into a cloud. The country beyond these hills northward is daunting terrible, being full of rocky hills . . . and clothed with infinite thick woods."[1]

In dealing with objects in natural history, the most valuable part of his work is in botany. Of course that science was then in a crude condition, and it may be that even in that condition Josselyn had not perfectly mastered it. According to the decision of Professor Edward Tuckerman, Josselyn is "little more than a herbalist; but it is enough that he gets beyond that entirely unscientific character. He certainly botanized, and made botanical use of Gerard and his other authorities. The credit belongs to him of indicating several genera as new which were so, and peculiar to the American Flora. . . . There are important parts of his account of our plants, in which we know with certainty what he intended to tell us; and farther, that this was worth the telling."[2]

Beyond the realm of botany, his contributions to natural history are less esteemed. Indeed, even within that realm, he was capable of making the announcement that, in America, barley "commonly degenerates into oats,"[3] and that "summer-wheat many times changeth into rye;"[4] while in the domain of the other sciences, he indulges in many assertions that exhibit the uncritical habits of even scientific observers in the seventeenth century. He informs us, with all gravity, that in their assemblies the Indians commonly carry on their discussions "in perfect hexameter verse," doing this "extempore."[5] He assures us

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[1] "New England's Rarities," 36. [2] Ibid. 15-16. [3] Ibid. 143.
[4] "Two Voyages to N. E." 336. [5] "New England's Rarities," 38.

that there is in New England a species of frog, "which chirp in the spring like sparrows, and croak like toads in autumn;" some of which "when they sit upon their breech are a foot high;" while "up in the country" they are "as big as a child of a year old."[1] He tells of swallows which, loving to dwell in chimneys, construct their nests so as to hang down "by a clew-like string a yard long." These swallows, he adds, "commonly have four or five young ones, and when they go away, which is much about the time that swallows use to depart, they never fail to throw down one of their young birds into the room by way of gratitude. I have more than once observed that, against the ruin of the family, these birds will suddenly forsake the house and come no more."[2] He gives a brilliant description of the Pilhannaw, "a monstrous great bird . . . four times as big as a goshawk, white-mailed, having two or three purple feathers in her head as long as geese's feathers; . . . her head is as big as a child's of a year old; a very princely bird. When she soars abroad, all sort of feathered creatures hide themselves; yet she never preys upon any of them, but upon fawns and jackals. She aeries in the woods upon the high hills of Ossapy."[3] These sentences upon the Pilhannaw are indeed delightful, the last one in particular being very sweet, with a certain far-off, appealing melody; and the artistic merit of the whole picture is perhaps enhanced by the consideration, that it seems to have been on his part an exploit of pure imagination, supplemented by some guess-work and hear-say,—this princely bird of Josselyn's being probably nothing but "a confused conception made up from several accounts of large birds" seen in different parts of America.[4]

It may not surprise us to ascertain that this author, whose scientific methods had in them so little severity, should have stopped occasionally to reproach his "skeptic

[1] "New England's Rarities," 76–77. [2] Ibid. 40.
[3] Ibid. 40–41. [4] Professor E. Tuckerman, ibid. note.

readers" for "muttering out of their scuttle-mouths" expressions of derisive unbelief in his statements. As a student of nature, his own capacity for receiving at the hands of other narrators prodigious gift-horses which he was too polite to look very sharply in the mouth, implied in him at least this compensating merit—a tolerant and catholic mood. And is it not possible, after all, that in our search for knowledge, swiftness to reject may be as great an impediment to progress as swiftness to accept? If extreme credulity swallows down a good deal of error, may it not be that extreme incredulity spurns away a good deal of truth? At any rate, our gentle author seems to have had some such notion; for in his life-time he walked quite freely about this earth, keeping his eyes and ears open for the discovery of such matters as he had not known before, and believing, as he tells us, "that there are many stranger things in the world than are to be seen between London and Stanes."[1]

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[1] "Two Voyages to N. E." 229. Josselyn also published in London, in 1674, "Chronological Observations of America, from the year of the World to the year of Christ, 1673." It is reprinted in 3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. III. 355–396; and is meagre and unimportant.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEW ENGLAND: THEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS WRITERS.

I.—The supremacy of the clergy in early New England—Their worthiness—Their public manifestations—How they studied and preached—The quality and vastness of the work they did.

II.—Thomas Hooker one of the three greatest—His career in England—Comes to Massachusetts—Founds Hartford—A prolific writer—His commanding traits as a man and an orator—His published writings—Literary characteristics—His frankness in damnatory preaching—Total depravity—Formalism—Need of Christ—The versatility and pathos of his appeals.

III.—New England's debt to Archbishop Laud—Thomas Shepard's animated interview with him, and its consequences—Shepard's settlement in America—Personal peculiarities—Illustrations of his theology and method of discourse.

IV.—John Cotton—His brave sermon in St. Mary's Church, Cambridge—Becomes rector of St. Botolph's, Boston—His great fame in England—His ascendency in New England—Correspondence with Cromwell—His death announced by a comet—As a student and writer.

V.—A group of minor prophets—Peter Bulkley founder of Concord—The man—His "Gospel Covenant"—John Norton—Succeeds John Cotton—His style as a writer—William Hooke—His life—His "New England's Tears for Old England's Fears"—Charles Chauncey's career in England and America—Becomes president of Harvard—Great usefulness as an educator—His scholarship, industry, old age—His "Plain Doctrine of Justification"—His unpublished writings made useful.

I.

AMONG the earliest official records of Massachusetts, there is a memorandum of articles needed there and to be procured from England. The list includes beans, pease, vine-planters, potatoes, hop-roots, pewter-bottles, brass-ladles, spoons, and ministers. It is but just to add that in the original document the article here mentioned last, stands first; even as in the seventeenth century, in New

England, that article would certainly have stood first in any conceivable list of necessaries, for this world or the world to come. An old historian, in describing the establishment of the colony of Plymouth, gives the true sequence in the two stages of the process when he says, they "planted a church of Christ there and set up civil government."[1] In the year 1640, a company of excellent people resolved to found a new town in Massachusetts, the town of Woburn; but before getting the town incorporated, they took pains to build a meeting-house and a parsonage, to choose a minister, and to fix the arrangements for his support.[2] New England was a country, as a noted writer of the early time expresses it, "whose interests were most remarkably and generally enwrapped in its ecclesiastical circumstances;"[3] it followed that for any town within its borders the presence or absence of a "laborious and illuminating ministry" meant the presence or absence of external prosperity. Indeed, the same writer stated the case with delightful commercial frankness when he remarked: "The gospel has evidently been the making of our towns."[4] During the first sixty years, New England was a theocracy, and the ministers were in reality the chief officers of state. It was not a departure from their sphere for them to deal with politics; for everything pertaining to the state was included in the sphere of the church. On occasion of an exciting popular election, in 1637, Mr. John Wilson, one of the pastors of Boston, climbed upon the bough of a tree, and from that high pulpit, with great authority, harangued the crowd upon their political duties. The greatest political functionaries, recognizing the ministers as in some sense their superior officers, "asked their advice upon the most important occasions,"[5] and sometimes even appealed to them for the settlement of personal differences that

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[1] Edw. Johnson, "Wonder-Working Providence," 18.

[2] Ibid. W. F. Poole's Introd. xci.

[3] "Magnalia," I. 296.

[4] Ibid. I. 89.

[5] John Eliot, in 1 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. X. 1.

had arisen among themselves. In 1632, the deputy-governor, Thomas Dudley, having a grievance against the governor, John Winthrop, made complaint to two ministers, John Wilson and Thomas Welde; whereupon a council of five ministers was convened to call before them the governor and the lieutenant governor, and to hear what they had to say for themselves; having heard it, the ministers "went apart for one hour," and then returned with their decision, to which the governor meekly submitted.[1] To speak ill of ministers was a species of sedition. In 1636, a citizen of Boston was required to pay a fine of forty pounds and to make a public apology, for saying that all the ministers but three preached a covenant of works.[2]

The objects of so much public deference were not unaware of their authority: they seldom abused it; they never forgot it. If ever men, for real worth and greatness, deserved such preëminence, they did; they had wisdom, great learning, great force of will, devout consecration, philanthropy, purity of life. For once in the history of the world, the sovereign places were filled by the sovereign men. They bore themselves with the air of leadership: they had the port of philosophers, noblemen, and kings. The writings of our earliest times are full of reference to the majesty of their looks, the awe inspired by their presence, the grandeur and power of their words.

Men like these, with such an ascendency as this over the public, could not come before the public too often, or stay there too long; and on two days in every seven, they presented themselves in solemn state to the people, and challenged undivided attention. Their pulpits were erected far aloft, and as remote as possible from the congregation, typifying the awful distance and the elevation of the sacred office which there exercised its mightiest function. Below, among the pews, the people were arranged, not in

[1] J. Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 98.
[2] T. Hutchinson, "Hist. Mass. Bay," I. 60.

families, but according to rank and age and sex; the old men in one place, the old dames in another; young men and maidens prudently seated far apart; the boys having the luxury of the pulpit stairs and the gallery. Failure to attend church was not a thing to be tolerated, except in cases of utter necessity. People who stayed away were hunted up by the tithing-men: for one needless absence they were to be fined; for such absence persisted in four weeks, they were to be set in the stocks or lodged in a wooden cage. Within the meeting-house, the entire congregation, but especially the boys, were vigilantly guarded by the town constables, each one being armed with a rod, at one end of which was a hare's foot, and at the other end a hare's tail. This weapon they wielded with justice tempered by gallantry: if a woman fell asleep, it was enough to tingle her face gently with the bushy end of the rod; but if the sleeper were a boy, he was vigorously thumped awake by the hard end of it.[1]

In the presence of God and of his appointed ministers, it was not for man to be impatient; and the modern frailty that clamors for short prayers and short sermons had not invaded their sanctuaries or even their thoughts. When they came to church, they settled themselves down to a regular religious siege, which was expected to last from three to five hours. Upon the pulpit stood an hour-glass; and as the sacred service of prayer and psalm and sermon moved ruthlessly forward, it was the duty of the sexton to go up hour by hour and turn the glass over. The prayers were of course extemporaneous; and in that solemn act, the gift of long continuance was successfully cultivated: the preacher, rising into raptures of devotion and storming heaven with volleys of petitionary syllogism, could hardly be required to take much note of the hour-glass. "Mr. Torrey stood up and prayed near two hours," writes a Harvard student in the seventeenth century; "but the

[1] T. W. Higginson, "Young Folks' Hist. U. S." 76–77.

time obliged him to close, to our regret; and we could have gladly heard him an hour longer."[1] Their sermons were of similar longitude, and were obviously exhaustive —except of the desire of the people to hear more. John Winthrop mentions a discourse preached at Cambridge by Thomas Hooker when he was ill: the minister at first proceeded in his discourse for fifteen minutes, then stopped and rested half an hour, then resumed and preached for two hours.[2] Well might Nathaniel Ward, in his whimsical satire, make this propensity of himself and his brethren the theme of a confession which was at least half in earnest: "We have a strong weakness in New England that when we are speaking we know not how to conclude. We make many ends before we make an end. . . . We cannot help it, though we can; which is the arch infirmity in all morality. We are so near the west pole that our longitudes are as long as any wise man would wish, and somewhat longer. I scarce know any adage more grateful than 'Grata brevitas.'"[3]

In his theme, in his audience, in the appointments of each sacred occasion, the preacher had everything to stimulate him to put into his sermons his utmost intellectual force. The entire community were present, constituting a congregation hardly to be equalled now for its high average of critical intelligence: trained to acute and rugged thinking by their habit of grappling day by day with the most difficult problems in theology; fond of subtile metaphysical distinctions; fond of system, minuteness, and completeness of treatment; not bringing to church any

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[1] J. L. Sibley, "Harv. Grad." 566.

[2] J. Winthrop, "Hist. N. E." I. 366. This was the length of Hooker's sermon at a time when he was ill; the historian does not state how long he would have preached had his health been as good as usual.

[3] "Simple Cobbler of Agawam," 91. Many early religious customs in New England are recorded in Thomas Lechford, "Plain Dealing, or News from New England," London, 1642: a book well described by its author as "these confused papers," 160.

moods of listlessness or flippancy; not expecting to find there mental diversion, or mental repose; but going there with their minds aroused for strenuous and robust work, and demanding from the preacher solid thought, not gushes of sentiment, not torrents of eloquent sound. Then, too, there was time enough for the preacher to move upon his subject carefully, and to turn himself about in it, and to develop the resources of it amply, to his mind's content, hour by hour, in perfect assurance that his congregation would not desert him either by going out or by going to sleep. Moreover, if a single discourse, even on the vast scale of a Puritan pulpit-performance, were not enough to enable him to give full statement to his topic, he was at liberty, according to a favorite usage in those days, to resume and continue the topic week by week, and month by month, in orderly sequence; thus, after the manner of a professor of theology, traversing with minute care and triumphant completeness the several great realms of his science. If the methods of the preacher resembled those of a theological professor, it may be added that his congregation likewise had the appearance of an assemblage of theological students; since it was customary for nearly every one to bring his note-book to church, and to write in it diligently as much of the sermon as he could take down. They had no newspapers, no theatres, no miscellaneous lectures, no entertainments of secular music or of secular oratory, none of the genial distractions of our modern life: the place of all these was filled by the sermon. The sermon was without a competitor in the eye or mind of the community. It was the central and commanding incident in their lives; the one stately spectacle for all men and all women year after year; the grandest matter of anticipation or of memory; the theme for hot disputes on which all New England would take sides, and which would seem sometimes to shake the world to its centre. Thus were the preachers held to a high standard of intellectual work. Hardly anything was lacking that could

incite a strong man to do his best continually, to the end of his days; and into the function of preaching, the supreme function at that time in popular homage and influence, the strongest men were drawn. Their pastorships were usually for life; and no man could long satisfy such listeners, or fail soon to talk himself empty in their presence, who did not toil mightily in reading and in thinking, pouring ideas into his mind even faster than he poured them out of it.

Without doubt, the sermons produced in New England during the colonial times, and especially during the seventeenth century, are the most authentic and characteristic revelations of the mind of New England for all that wonderful epoch. They are commonly spoken of mirthfully by an age that lacks the faith of that period, its earnestness, its grip, its mental robustness; a grinning and a flabby age, an age hating effort, and requiring to be amused. The theological and religious writings of early New England may not now be readable; but they are certainly not despicable. They represent an enormous amount of subtile, sustained, and sturdy brain-power. They are, of course, grave, dry, abstruse, dreadful; to our debilitated attentions they are hard to follow; in style they are often uncouth and ponderous; they are technical in the extreme; they are devoted to a theology that yet lingers in the memory of mankind only through certain shells of words long since emptied of their original meaning. Nevertheless, these writings are monuments of vast learning, and of a stupendous intellectual energy both in the men who produced them and in the men who listened to them. Of course they can never be recalled to any vital human interest. They have long since done their work in moving the minds of men. Few of them can be cited as literature. In the mass, they can only be labelled by the antiquarians and laid away upon shelves to be looked at occasionally as curiosities of verbal expression, and as relics of an intellectual condition gone forever.

They were conceived by noble minds; they are themselves noble. They are superior to our jests. We may deride them, if we will; but they are not derided.

II.

Of all the great preachers who came to New England in our first age, there were three who, according to the universal opinion of their contemporaries, towered above all others,—Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard, John Cotton. These three could be compared with one another; but with them could be compared no one else. They stood apart, above rivalry, above envy. In personal traits they differed; they were alike in bold and energetic thinking, in massiveness of erudition, in a certain overpowering personal persuasiveness, in the gift of fascinating and resistless pulpit oratory.

Thomas Hooker, though not the eldest, died the first, namely in 1647, aged sixty-one. He had then been in America fourteen years. Before coming to America he had achieved in England a brilliant, influential, troubled career. He was a graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge; taking holy orders, he was for some years a preacher in London; in 1626, being forty years old, he became religious lecturer and assistant minister in Chelmsford; and there, if not before, he planted himself conspicuously upon grounds of non-conformity to several doctrines and usages of the established church. In no long time, of course, Bishop Laud was upon his track, storming with ecclesiastical fury. Hooker was cast out of the pulpit. At once he set up a grammar-school near Chelmsford, whence, however, once more the echoes of his eloquent and brave talk even in private, reached the ears of the bishop. Hooker had to flee for his life. Of course he fled to Holland; and there for two or three years he preached to English congregations at Delft and at Rotterdam. Already many of his friends had gone across the

Atlantic to the great Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay; and in 1633 he himself went thither, in the same ship with his illustrious compeer, John Cotton. For three years after his arrival in New England, he preached to the church in Cambridge; and in 1636 he led his entire flock, about a hundred families, westward through the wilderness to the lovely valley of the Connecticut, where they built the town of Hartford,—a town which then seemed to the people of Boston to be so close to the western verge of the world that, as they used to say, the last great conflict with antichrist would certainly take place there. Of this colony, Hooker was priest and king; and here, during the last eleven years of his life, he did perhaps his best work, studying hard, preaching hard, shaping for all time the character of the community which he founded, and pouring forth in swift succession through the press of London, those glowing and powerful religious treatises of his which at once became classics in Puritan literature. Soon after his death, a noble young minister, John Higginson, revering his genius, went through the toil of copying two hundred of Hooker's sermons, and sent them to England for publication. There, under various titles, about one half of them were printed. In 1830, one hundred and eighty-three years after Hooker's death, the old parsonage at Hartford was torn down, and in it were found large quantities of manuscripts, supposed to have been his. What they were, we know not. They may have contained letters, diaries, and other invaluable personal and historical memoranda; but there happened to be no one then in the city which Hooker founded, to give shelter to these venerable treasures, and to save them from the doom of being thrown into the Connecticut River.

In the living presence of Hooker there appears to have been some singular personal force, an air both of saintliness and kingliness, that lofty and invincible moral genius which the Hebrew prophets had, and with which they captivated or smote down human resistance. Even during his

life-time and shortly afterward, there gathered about him the halo of spiritual mystery, a sort of supernatural prestige, anecdotes of weird achievement that in a darker age would have blossomed into frank and vivid legends of miraculous power. In his youth there was noticed in him "a grandeur of mind" that marked him out for something uncommon. As he came on into manhood, his person and bearing partook of peculiar majesty; the imperial dignity of his office made him imperial. "He was a person," they said, "who when he was doing his Master's work, would put a king into his pocket." People, seeing how fiery was his temper, marvelled at his perfect command of it: he governed it as a man governs a mastiff with a chain; "he could let out his dog," they said, "and pull in his dog as he pleased."[1] As he ruled himself, so he ruled other men, easily; they felt his right to command them. In his school near Chelmsford, a word or a look from him was all the discipline that was needed. His real throne was the pulpit. There he swayed men with a power that was more than regal. His face had authority and utterance in it; his voice was rich, of great compass and flexibility; every motion of him spoke. The impressiveness of his preaching began in his vivacity; he flashed life into any subject, no matter how dead before. He so grappled the minds of his hearers that they could not get away from him. While he preached at Chelmsford, an ungodly person once said to his companions: "Come, let us go hear what that bawling Hooker will say to us." The mocker went; but he was no longer a mocker. Hooker had that to say to him which subdued him: he became a penitent and devout man, and followed his conqueror to America.[2] Once Hooker was to preach in the great church at Leicester. A leading burgess of the town, hating the preacher and thinking to suppress him, hired fiddlers to stand near the church door and fiddle while Hooker should preach;

[1] "Magnalia," I. 345.

[2] Ibid. I. 337.

but somehow Hooker's preaching was mightier and more musical than the fiddlers' fiddling. The burgess, astonished at such power, then went near to the door to hear for himself what sort of talking that was which kept people from noticing his fiddlers; soon even he was clutched by the magnetism of the orator, sucked in through the door in spite of himself, smitten down by stroke after stroke of eloquent truth, and converted. Hooker's personality had in it something which made it easy for his disciples to think, that the Almighty would require even the forces of nature to pay considerable deference to so wonderful a man. On his flight toward the sea-side, as he was escaping to Holland, an attendant, knowing that an officer was in full chase not far behind, said anxiously: "Sir, what if the wind should not be fair when you come to the vessel?" "Brother, let us leave that with Him who keeps the wind in the hollow of his hand." And they noticed that, though the wind was against them before Hooker reached the vessel, as soon as he got aboard "it immediately came about fair and fresh," and swept the ship out to sea just in time to leave his pursuer panting and baffled upon the shore.[1] Hooker, like many another strong man, seems to have had a Cæsarean faith in himself and his fortunes. On the voyage to Holland the vessel struck by night upon the sands. A panic ran through the ship. Hooker, though unknown to them, by sheer force of personal greatness, restored them to quiet: he just told them not to be frightened; that they should surely be preserved.[2] They had to believe the man who could say that. Multitudes of his contemporaries supposed him to have the gift of prophecy. He himself assumed to have it. Long before the civil war in England he said openly in a sermon: "It has been told me from God, that God will destroy England, and lay it waste, and that the people shall be put unto the sword, and the tem-

[1] "Magnalia," I. 338. [2] Ibid.

ples burnt, and many houses laid in ashes."[1] When this man prayed, they noticed that there was some very strange power in it. "His prayer," says Cotton Mather, "was usually like Jacob's ladder, wherein the nearer he came to an end, the nearer he drew towards heaven."[2] Such praying as his, they were sure, God would take particular notice of. Once during a war between the weak Mohegans, who were our friends, and the strong Narragansetts, who were our enemies, this holy man prayed strenuously against the Narragansetts. "And the effect of it was," says the historian, "that the Narragansetts received a wonderful overthrow from the Mohegans."[3]

Every Monday was set apart by him as a day for private consultation upon cases of conscience. It was simply an involuntary Protestant confessional, born of the great need people had to tell their secrets to this particular man; and all sorts of perturbed beings came, and laid their spiritual maladies before him, and were comforted.

It is not to be supposed that, at the close of a life into which so many marvellous things had entered, death would come unheralded by supernatural tokens. On the last Sunday of his life, when he preached and administered the Lord's Supper, "some of his most observant hearers" perceived "an astonishing sort of a cloud" in the room, and among themselves "a most unaccountable heaviness and sleepiness . . . not unlike the drowsiness of the disciples when our Lord was going to die." In a few days the mystery was explained. After a short illness, "at last he closed his own eyes with his own hands, and gently stroking his own forehead, with a smile in his countenance, he gave a little groan, and so expired his soul into the arms of his fellow-servants, the holy angels."[4]

From all the communities of New England a wail of grief went up at the tidings of his death: this was the first one of their mighty leaders that had fallen in the

[1] "Magnalia," I. 341. [2] Ibid. 344. [3] Ibid. 344. [4] Ibid. 350.

wilderness. One writer mourned him in a Latin elegy, two lines of which have this sense in English:

> "The thought will come when o'er him thus we moan,
> That in his grave New England finds her own."[1]

One of his clerical brethren, Peter Bulkley, contenting himself with English verse, thus celebrated Hooker's traits as a preacher:

> "To mind he gave light of intelligence,
> And searched the corners of the conscience.
> To sinners stout, which no law could bring under,
> To them, he was a son of dreadful thunder,
> When all strong oaks of Bashan used to quake,
> And fear did Libanus his cedars shake.
> The stoutest hearts he fillëd full of fears;
> He clave the rocks, they melted into tears;
> Yet to sad souls, with sense of sin cast down,
> He was a son of consolation."[2]

His great contemporary, John Cotton, saluted him with tender congratulation:

> "Now, blessed Hooker, thou art set on high,
> Above the thankless world and cloudy sky;
> Do thou of all thy labor reap the crown,
> Whilst we here reap the seed which thou hast sown."[3]

Finally, the process of Protestant canonization was completed some time afterward, when one writer gave expression to the general belief, by calling him "Saint Hooker."

The published writings of Thomas Hooker number twenty-three titles.[4] Many of them are large treatises; all of them are on matters of theology, church-polity, or religious life. A noted English preacher of that age said,

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[1] "Morte tua infandum cogor renovare dolorem Quippe tua videat terra Nov-Angla suam." This Latin poem, which was by Elijah Corlet, of Cambridge, is given by Mather, "Magnalia," I. 351.

[2] Morton, "New England's Memorial," 240. [3] Ibid. 238–239.

[4] A list of them is given in E. W. Hooker's "Life of T. Hooker," 172–175; also in Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 36.

that to praise the writings of Hooker would be "to lay paint upon burnished marble, or add light unto the sun."[1] This of course is the rapture of contemporaneous enthusiasm; and yet even for us there remains in Hooker's words a genuine vitality, the charm of clearness, earnestness, reality, strength. Remembering what the man was, who once stood behind these words, we cannot much wonder at the effects produced by them. He has many of the traits common to the Puritan writers of his time: minute and multitudinous divisions and subdivisions; the anatomy of his discourse exposed on the outside of it; a formal announcement of doctrine, proofs, sequences, applications; showers of quotation from Scripture. He has also some exceptional literary advantages: a copious and racy vocabulary; an aptitude for strong verbal combinations; dramatic spirit; the gift of translating arguments into pictures; cumulative energy, oratorical verve. This orator is dead: his words after all are not dead.

What he wrote is literature meant for the ear, not the eye; having the rhythm and cadence of a good speech. It is constructed for swift practical effect on the minds, passions, resolutions of men. Its lines of thought are straight, rugged, bold; its movement is like the unhesitating tramp of an advancing army; it quite omits the graces of reserve, the dallying and tenderness of literary implication. We are apt to startle at the blunt integrity of his speech. His theology has a fierce and menacing side to it, the mention of which he takes no pains to conceal from ears polite. He uses frankly all the stern and haggard words of his sect. He awards punishment to sinners in good, round, English curses, that are plain and fructifying. He assures them of damnation right heartily. His pages gleam and blaze with the flashes of threatened hell-fire. His ink has even yet a smell of theological sulphur in it.

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[1] Allen, "Biog. Dict." Art. T. Hooker.

It was one part of his duty, as he thought, to "fasten the nail of terror deep into their hearts;"[1] and in rhetoric well-seasoned for the use of "proud sinners" he greatly excels: "Do you think to out-brave the Almighty? . . . Dost thou think to go to heaven thus bolt-upright? The Lord cannot endure thee here, and will he suffer thee to dwell with himself forever in heaven? What, thou to heaven upon these terms? Nay, . . . how did the Lord deal with Lucifer and all those glorious spirits? He sent them all down to hell for their pride."[2] "The Lord comes out in battle array against a proud person, and singles him out from all the rest, and . . . saith, 'Let that drunkard and that swearer alone a while, but let me destroy that proud heart forever. You shall submit in spite of your teeth, when the great God of heaven and earth shall come to execute vengeance."[3] "There must be subjection or else confusion. Will you out-brave the Almighty to his face, and will you dare damnation? . . . As proud as you, have been crushed and humbled. Where are all those Nimrods, and Pharaohs, and all those mighty monarchs of the world? The Lord hath thrown them flat upon their backs, and they are in hell this day."[4]

He gives sinners to understand, also, that the hell-torments which await them are none of those metaphorical and altogether tolerable hell-torments that are now usually signified by that term: "Judge the torments of hell by some little beginning of it, and the dregs of the Lord's vengeance by some little sips of it; and judge how unable thou art to bear the whole, by thy inability to bear a little of it. . . . When God lays the flashes of hell-fire upon thy soul, thou canst not endure it. . . . When the Lord hath let in a little horror of heart into the soul of a poor sinful creature, how he is transported with an insupportable burden . . . roaring and yelling as if he were in hell

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[1] "Effectual Calling," 43.
[2] "The Soul's Humiliation," 92.
[3] Ibid. 94.
[4] Ibid. 223.

already. . . . If the drops be so heavy, what will the whole sea of God's vengeance be?"[1]

The doctrine of the total depravity of man lay in his mind under a light of absolute certainty; and in commending this doctrine to his congregations, he did not dim it by any glozing or euphemistic words: "Thou art dead in trespasses and sins. What is that? A man is wholly possessed with a body of corruption, and the spawn of all abomination hath overspread the whole man. . . . All noisome lusts abound in the soul, and take possession of it, and rule in it, and are fed there. . . . No carrion in a ditch smells more loathsomely in the nostrils of man, than a natural man's works do in the nostrils of the Almighty."[2] "Alas, the devil hath power over you. As it is with a dead sheep, all the carrion crows in the country come to prey upon it, and all base vermin breed and creep there; so it is with every poor, natural, carnal creature under heaven—a company of devils, like so many carrion crows, prey upon the heart . . . and all base lusts crawl, and feed, and are maintained in such a wretched heart."[3]

His speech is vigorous in denunciation of religious formalism. He tells them that the outward duties are important, but that these without Christ cannot save any one. Forms are but the bucket; Christ is the well: "If you say your bucket shall help you, you may starve for thirst if you let it not down into the well for water; so, though you brag of your praying, and hearing, and fasting, and of your alms, and building of hospitals, and your good deeds, if none of these bring you to Christ, you shall die for thirst."[4] "I do not dishonor these ordinances, but I curse all carnal confidence in them. . . . Hell is full of hearers, and dissemblers, and carnal wretches that never had hearts to seek unto Christ in these duties, and to see the value of a Saviour in them."[5]

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[1] E. W. Hooker's "Life of T. Hooker," 206–7.
[2] "The Soul's Humiliation," 33–34. [3] Ibid. 37. [4] Ibid. 11. [5] Ibid. 18.

As outward forms of piety cannot save the sinner, neither can ministers of the gospel, potent as they are, save him: "Dost thou think that a few faint prayers, and lazy wishes, and a little horror of heart, can pluck a dead man from the grave of his sins, and a damned soul from the pit of hell, and change the nature of a devil to be a saint? No, it is not possible. . . . We are as able to make worlds, and to pull hell in pieces, as to pull a poor soul from the paw of the devil."[1] "Should you pray till you can speak no more; and should you sigh to the breaking of your loins; should every word be a sigh, and every sigh a tear, and every tear a drop of blood, you would never be able to recover that grace which you lost in Adam."[2]

As he passes thus from realm to realm in the vast empire of Christian persuasion, he reaches at times those which appeal to nobler passions than terror or shame; and when he will, he can make a most gallant spiritual charge, and carry for his Master the batteries of self-respect, magnanimity, honor: "Christ must needs take this unkindly that you should give the devil the flower of your age, and give to Christ but the decrepit and infirm parts of your lives; that the devil should suck out the marrow of your youth, and only give God the dry bones, a palsy head, a dim eye, a weak body."[3]

He depicts dramatically, and with a soothing tenderness, the struggle of the soul to find its way to Christ and to be saved: "When a poor travelling man comes to the ferry, he cries to the other side, 'Have over! have over!' His meaning is he would go to the other side by a boat. . . . So Christ is in heaven; but we are here on earth . . . on the other side of the river. The ordinances of God are but as so many boats to carry us and to land us at heaven where our hopes are, and our hearts should be. . . . 'Have over! have over!' saith the soul. The soul desires

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[1] "The Soul's Humiliation," 37.
[2] "Effectual Calling," 15. [3] Ibid. 70.

to be landed at the stairs of mercy, and saith, 'Oh, bring me to speak with my Saviour.'"[1]

He tells them that if they have found Christ and have received his gifts, then are they rich with treasures outshining all the world's riches: "Though a man should beg his bread from door to door, if he can beg Christ and have it, and beg grace and have it, he is the richest man upon earth."[2]

He points out the true method of success in the Christian life, warning them, for example, against idleness, and against impatience: "Whilst the stream keeps running, it keeps clear; but let it stand still, it breeds frogs and toads and all manner of filth. So while you keep going, you keep clear; but do but once flag in your diligence, and stand still, and oh! what a puddle of filth and sin thy heart will be."[3] "We must wait God's leisure, and stay his time for the bestowing of his favors. Beggars must not be choosers."[4]

He seeks to draw them to the higher spiritual life by the imagery of love and utmost tenderness: "Let us be led by all means into a nearer union with the Lord Christ. As a wife deals with the letters of her husband that is in a far country, she finds many sweet inklings of his love, and she will read these letters often and daily, . . . because she would be with her husband a little, and have a little parley with him in his pen, though not in his presence; so these ordinances are but the Lord's love-letters, and we are the ambassadors of Christ, and . . . we bring marvellous good news that Christ can save all poor broken-hearted sinners in the world."[5]

He assures them that in the grace of utter resignation they touch the very essence of felicity and victory: "Be content to want what God will deny, and to wait God's good pleasure, and to be at his disposing. . . What-

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[1] "The Soul's Humiliation," 75. [2] "Effectual Calling," 76. [3] Ibid. 13.
[4] "Christ's Last Prayer," 98. [5] "The Soul's Humiliation," 73–74.

soever can or shall befall you by the devil and his instruments, and if every spire of grass were a devil, be humbled, and then be above all the devils in hell, and all temptations, and oppositions."[1] "God hath but two thrones; and the humble heart is one."[2] "An humble soul, a poor soul, a very beggar at the gate of mercy, the Lord will not only know him, . . . but he will give him such a gracious look as shall make his heart dance in his breast. Thou poor humbled soul, the Lord will give thee a glimpse of his favor, when thou art tried in thy trouble; and when thou lookest up to heaven, the Lord will look down upon thee."[3] "Men, brethren, and fathers, if there be any soul here that is content in truth and sincerity to be humbled, and to be at God's disposing, . . . do not you make too much haste to go to heaven; the Lord Jesus Christ will come down from heaven and dwell in your hearts."[4] "In thy distempers be humbled and yet comforted: Christ hath overcome the power of them. They may plague thee: they shall not prevail against thee. . . . The power of Christ's prayer will outlive thy life, and the life of thy sins, and set heaven's gates open before thee."[5] "It is with the soul in this case as it is with a mariner; though his hand be upon the oar, yet he ever looks homeward to the haven where he would be."[6]

III.

New England has perhaps never quite appreciated its great obligations to Archbishop Laud. It was his overmastering hate of non-conformity, it was the vigilance and vigor and consecrated cruelty with which he scoured his own diocese and afterward all England, and hunted down and hunted out the ministers who were committing the unpardonable sin of dissent, that conferred upon the prin-

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[1] "The Soul's Humiliation," 144–145.
[2] Ibid. 213.
[3] Ibid. 214–215.
[4] Ibid. 220.
[5] "Christ's Last Prayer," 203.
[6] "The Soul's Humiliation," 69.

cipal colonies of New England their ablest and noblest men. Indeed, without Laud, those principal colonies would perhaps never have had an existence. His dreadful name is linked to our early story by sickening memories of terror and brutal insult and grief, of darkened fire-sides, of foul prisons opened to receive saints instead of felons, of delicate women and little children set adrift in the world without shelter or protector; of good men—scholars, apostles—fleeing for their lives, under masks, under false names, skulking in the guise of criminals, from the land they were born in.

The short and easy way with dissenters that Laud adopted, is happily shown in his treatment of Thomas Shepard. In the year 1630, this gifted and consecrated man, then twenty-five years old, a graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and admitted to holy orders by the bishop of Peterborough, was preaching in the little town of Earles-Colne, in Essex. The odor of his Puritanical piety had reached the nostrils of Laud, then bishop of London. On the sixteenth of December, of the year just named, at about eight o'clock in the morning, the poor parson, in obedience to a citation, presented himself before the face of the bishop in his palace in the great city. Of the vivacious conversation that then ensued, the parson himself has left us a narrative.[1] "As soon as I came, . . . falling into a fit of rage he asked me what degree I had taken in the university. I answered him, I was a Master of Arts. He asked, of what college? I answered, of Emmanuel. He asked, how long I had lived in his diocese. I answered, three years and upwards. He asked, who maintained me all this while, charging me to deal plainly with him; adding withal that he had been more cheated and equivocated with by some of my malignant faction than ever was man by Jesuit. At the speaking of which

[1] "First printed from Shepard's manuscript, by Thomas Prince, "Chron. Hist. N. E." I. 338; and reprinted in Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 518-520.

words he looked as though blood would have gushed out of his face, and did shake as if he had been haunted with an ague fit, to my apprehension, by reason of his extreme malice and secret venom. I desired him to excuse me. He fell then to threaten me, and withal to bitter railing, . . . saying, 'You prating coxcomb, do you think all the learning is in your brain?' He pronounced his sentence thus: 'I charge you that you neither preach, read, marry, bury, or exercise any ministerial function, in any part of my diocese; for if you do, and I hear of it, I'll be upon your back, and follow you wherever you go, in any part of the kingdom, and so everlastingly disenable you.' . . . I prayed him to suffer me to catechise in the Sabbath days in the afternoon. He replied, 'Spare your breath. I'll have no such fellows prate in my diocese. Get you gone; and now make your complaints to whom you will.' So away I went." Very naturally the young parson was at first somewhat dazed by the Laudean hurricane that had swept over him; and two days afterward, he met half a dozen of his clerical brethren who "consulted together," as he tells us, "whether it was best to let such a swine to root up God's plants in Essex, and not to give him some check."[1]

Unfortunately, in the present case, the mighty hunters were all on the side of the swine; and the check which the parsons had hoped to give to him was abundantly bestowed upon themselves. They were routed and scattered, this way and that. For four years Thomas Shepard was a wanderer in England, eager to preach the gospel and having a wonderful aptitude that way, but unable to find anywhere in England a spot that was not interdicted to him by Laud's unslumbering hostility. Accordingly, in 1635, resolving to put the ocean between himself and his enemy, he came to New England; and early in the following year, he took charge of the church in Cambridge, and there remained until his death in 1649.

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[1] Shepard's autobiography, in Young, "Chron. Mass. Bay," 521.

Even during his life-time his fame as a pulpit-orator and a writer rose high in both Englands; and it rose still higher after his death. In person he had some disadvantages. He lacked the bodily vigor, the massive proportions, the stateliness, of his two compeers, Thomas Hooker and John Cotton. His contemporaries describe him to us as a poor, weak, pale-complexioned man, whose physical powers were feeble but spent to the full. He was a cloistered student and an invalid, recoiling from the crisp breath of a New England winter; during which season, as he tells us, there was a near relation between him and the fireside.[1] But his fragile body was possessed by a spirit of uncommon beauty, devoutness, and power. He had a subtile and commanding intellect; he was a profound thinker; his style was in the main clear, terse, abounding in energy, with frequent flashes of eloquence; and the charm of his diction was enhanced by the manner of his speech, which was almost matchless for its sweet and lofty grace, its pathos, its thrilling intensity, its ringing fulness and force. His successor in office spoke of "the lively voice of this soul-melting preacher."[2] John Higginson described him as one who was both "a Timothy in his family" and a "Chrysostom in the pulpit."[3] His writings, which have been honored by a modern edition,[4] have had among theologians of his school a permanent reputation. He has been much read by his own profession. He may be described as the preacher's preacher. His brethren have paid to him the flattering tribute of lavishly borrowing both his ideas and his words. From a single one of Thomas Shepard's books, Jonathan Edwards, it is said, drew nearly a hundred citations for his celebrated "Treatise concerning Religious Affections."

The theology of Thomas Shepard, of course, derived its characteristic features not from him, but from his age and his sect: it was harsh, dark, inexorable; most sincere in

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[1] "Clear Sunshine of the Gospel," 8.
[2] Works of T. Shepard, II. 10.
[3] Ibid. I. clxxxii.
[4] Three volumes, Boston, 1853.

its exaggerations of the sinfulness of man and the wrathfulness of God; placing on the throne of the universe a stark divine justice, upon which scarcely fell one glimmer of divine pity; copious in maledictions; having a marvellous alacrity in making its consignments of souls to the devil.

The doctrine, for example, that "in Adam's fall we sinned all," is expounded by this preacher with a courage and a candor that never flinched before considerations either of humanity or of common-sense: "We are all in Adam, as a whole country in a parliament man; the whole country doth what he doth."[1] To some, the felicity of this comparison may be damaged by the fact that, while the country chooses its parliament man to stand for it, "we made no particular choice of Adam to stand for us;"[2] but the reply is, that the choice was made not by us but on our behalf, ages before we were born, by a Being infinitely better and wiser than we are. This first step being made secure, every subsequent step is logical and easy. Each man, having thus fallen into sin thousands of ages before he was born, finds, on arriving to take possession of the existence thus blighted for him in advance, that his fall is an exceedingly complete one—dragging down with itself every faculty and atom of his nature. Nowhere else, perhaps, is the dogma of total depravity presented to us in braver, or more sprightly limning: "Every natural man and woman is born full of all sin, as full as a toad is of poison, as full as ever his skin can hold; mind, will, eyes, mouth, every limb of his body, and every piece of his soul, is full of sin; their hearts are bundles of sin."[3] "Thy mind is a nest of all the foul opinions, heresies, that ever were vented by any man; thy heart is a foul sink of all atheism, sodomy, blasphemy, murder, whoredom, adultery, witchcraft, buggery; so that if thou hast any good thing in thee, it is but as a drop of rose-water in a bowl of poison. . . . It is true thou feelest not all these things stir-

[1] Works of T. Shepard, I. 24. [2] Ibid. I. 24. [3] Ibid. 28.

ring in thee at one time . . . ; but they are in thee, like a nest of snakes in an old hedge."[1]

Certainly this is a dire condition of affairs; and it is entailed upon every man at his birth, in consequence of the personal misconduct of an individual, named Adam, who lived some sixty centuries ago; who was the moral representative of every man, but who was chosen as representative by no man. And what is to be done about it? Is there any escape? If the man be one of the elect, yes; if he be not one of the elect, no. In the latter case, "God shall set himself like a consuming infinite fire against thee, and tread thee under his feet, who hast by sin trod him and his glory under foot all thy life. . . . I tell thee all the wisdom of God shall then be set against thee to devise torments for thee. . . . The torment which wisdom shall devise, the almighty power of God shall inflict upon thee; so as there was never such power seen in making the world, as in holding a poor creature under this wrath, that holds up the soul in being with one hand, and beats it with the other; ever burning like fire against a creature, and yet that creature never burnt up. Think not this cruelty: it is justice. What cares God for a vile wretch, whom nothing can make good while it lives? If we have been long in hewing a block, and we can make no meet vessel of it, put it to no good use for ourselves, we cast it into the fire. God heweth thee by sermons, sickness, losses and crosses, sudden death, mercies and miseries, yet nothing makes thee better. What should God do with thee, but cast thee hence? O consider of this wrath before you feel it. . . . Thou canst not endure the torments of a little kitchen-fire, on the tip of thy finger, not one half hour together. How wilt thou bear the fury of this infinite, endless, consuming fire, in body and soul, throughout all eternity?"[2] "Death cometh hissing . . . like a fiery dragon with the sting of vengeance in the mouth of it. . . . Then

[1] Works of T. Shepard, I. 28.

[2] Ibid. I. 42–43.

shall God surrender up thy forsaken soul into the hands of devils, who, being thy jailers, must keep thee, till the great day of account; so that as thy friends are scrambling for thy goods, and worms for thy body, so devils shall scramble for thy soul. . . . Thy forlorn soul shall lie moaning for the time past, now it is too late to recall again; groaning under the intolerable torments of the wrath of God present, and amazed at the eternity of misery and sorrow that is to come; waiting for that fearful hour, when the last trump shall blow, and body and soul meet to bear that wrath,—that fire that shall never go out."[1]

IV.

Not far from the year 1612, the ancient church of Saint Mary, in Cambridge, was filled one day by a great concourse of persons,—under-graduates, fellows, professors,—who had been attracted thither by the brilliant reputation of a member of their own university, a fellow of Emmanuel College, John Cotton by name, then only about twenty-seven years old. This person had been in the university ever since he was a lad of thirteen; he had continually distinguished himself as a scholar; he had risen to be catechist, head-lecturer, and dean in the college to which he belonged. He was proficient in the logic and philosophy then taught in the schools; was a critical master of Greek; could converse fluently either in Latin or in Hebrew. Beyond all other things, he had genius for oratory, particularly the oratory of the pulpit. It was his extraordinary fame in that direction which had drawn together the great crowd to hear him on the occasion to which reference has been made. Several times before, he had preached in the presence of the whole university, always carrying off their applause; for he had never failed to give them the sort of sermons that were then in fashion,—

[1] Works of T. Shepard, I. 35–39.

learned, ornate, pompous, bristling with epigrams, stuffed with conceits, all set off dramatically by posture, gesture, and voice. Meantime, however, his religious character had been deepening into Puritanism. He had come to view his own preaching as frivolous, Sadducean, pagan. In preparing once more to preach to this congregation of worldly and witty folk, he had resolved to give them a sermon intended to exhibit Jesus Christ, rather than John Cotton. This he did. His hearers were astonished, disgusted. Not a murmur of applause greeted the several stages of his discourse as formerly. They pulled their shovel-caps down over their faces, folded their arms, and sat it out sullenly,—amazed that the promising John Cotton had turned lunatic or Puritan.

Evidently there was stuff in this man; and he it was who, twenty years later, came over to New England, and acquired there a marvellous ascendency, personal and professional,—an ascendency more sovereign, probably, than any other American clergyman has ever reached. The interval of twenty years that fell between that brave university-sermon, and his great career in New England, was by no means a blank. In fact it was a period for him very rich and intense in incident. He left the university to take charge of the great church of St. Botolph's, at Boston, in Lincolnshire, and there he remained till his removal to Boston, in New England. Year by year, while he lived in the elder Boston, he grew in knowledge about the Bible, and in the science of God and man as seen through the dun goggles of John Calvin; his singular faculty as a preacher greatened every way, in force and splendor; his fame filled all the kingdom; and though he was far from being a good churchman, the powerful prelate, Lord Keeper Williams, told King James that Cotton was a good man and a good preacher, and got from the king a promise that Cotton should not be disturbed; finally, under the reign of Charles, the preacher drew upon himself the fatal eye of Bishop Laud. It was in 1633 that

Laud became primate of England; which meant, among other things, that nowhere within the rim of that imperial island was there to be peace or safety any longer for John Cotton. Some of his friends in high station tried to use persuasive words with the archbishop on his behalf; but the archbishop brushed aside their words with an insupportable scorn. The earl of Dorset sent a message to Cotton, that if he had only been guilty of drunkenness, or adultery, or any such minor ministerial offence, his pardon could have been had; but since his crime was Puritanism, he must flee for his life.[1] So, for his life he fled, first hiding himself here and there about London, dodging his pursuers; and finally slipping out of England, after innumerable perils, like a hunted felon; landing in Boston in September, 1633.

His arrival filled the colony with exceeding joy. It was a thing they had been praying for. Even the name of Boston had been given to their chief town as a compliment and an enticement to him.

> "The lantern of St. Botolph's ceased to burn,
> When from the portals of that church he came
> To be a burning and a shining light,
> Here in the wilderness."[2]

At once, the most conspicuous pulpit was given to him; and from that hour till his death nineteen years afterward, he wielded with strong and brilliant mastership the fierce theocracy of New England. Laymen and clergymen alike recognized his supremacy, and rejoiced in it. He was the unmitred pope of a pope-hating commonwealth. "I hold myself not worthy," said an eminent minister of Massachusetts, "to wipe his slippers."[3] Roger Williams wrote, evidently with a subdued smile, that some people in Massachusetts used to say that "they could hardly believe

[1] "Magnalia," I. 263.

[2] Longfellow, "New England Tragedies," 15.

[3] Nathaniel Ward, quoted by J. W. Dean, "Memoir" of Ward, 83.

that God would suffer Mr. Cotton to err."[1] The contemporary historian, William Hubbard, states that whatever John Cotton "delivered in the pulpit was soon put into an order of court . . . or set up as a practice in the church."[2] Another clergyman of that day, trying to utter his homage for John Cotton, found the resources of prose inadequate:

> "A man of might at heavenly eloquence,
> To fix the ear and charm the conscience;
> As if Apollos were revived in him,
> Or he had learnëd of a seraphim.
> . . . . . .
> Rocks rent before him, blind received their sight,
> Souls levelled to the dunghill stood upright."[3]

When in 1651, he, the mightiest man in New England, wrote to Cromwell, the mightiest man in old England, the latter promptly "took this liberty from business, to salute" John Cotton, as his "dear friend," to confess to him his own sense of unworthiness, and to inform him of the progress of events then big with the fulfilment of prophecies, adding, "We need your prayers in this as much as ever;" and closing with this cordial subscription, "Your affectionate friend to serve you."[4]

It was, of course, rather strange that the Almighty should permit such a man to die; but when at last death did come to him, the services of his interment, we are told, made "the most grievous and solemn funeral that was ever known perhaps upon the American strand."[5]

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[1] Narr. Club Pub. IV. 42.

[2] Hubbard, "Gen. Hist. N. E." 182.

[3] The whole is given in Morton, "New England's Memorial," 254.

[4] Carlyle, "Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches" (N. Y. 1859), II. 8–10; where Carlyle speaks of John Cotton as "a painful preacher, oracular of high gospels to New England: who in his day was well seen to be connected with the Supreme Powers of this universe; . . . was thought especially on his death-bed to have manifested gifts even of prophecy—a thing not inconceivable to the human mind that well considers prophecy and John Cotton."

[5] "Magnalia," I. 273.

Nay, it was commonly believed at the time, that even the heavens as well as the earth took note of the dreadful event, and that Providence set aflame in the sky an indubitable signal of it. "About the time of his sickness," says the historian, Nathaniel Morton, "there appeared in the heavens over New England a comet, giving a dim light; and so waxed dimmer and dimmer, until it became quite extinct and went out; which time of its being extinct was soon after the time of the period of his life: it being a very signal testimony that God had then removed a bright star, a burning and a shining light out of the heaven of his church here, unto celestial glory above." [1]

Although John Cotton was a prolific author, his place in our early literary history bears no proportion to his place in our early religious and political history. As a student, he was of the heroic pattern of the seventeenth century. A sand-glass which would run four hours stood near him when he studied, and being turned over three times, measured his day's work. This he called "a scholar's day." Esteeming John Calvin to be greater than all the fathers and all the school-men, he was accustomed to read in him last of all every evening: "I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep." [2] His grandson, Cotton Mather, who upon such a theme never lapsed into an understatement, tells us that John Cotton "was indeed a most universal scholar, and a living system of the liberal arts, and a walking library." [3]

Upon better testimony we know that he certainly had large reading, a retentive memory, great intellectual poise, agility, and self-command, all his accomplishments and accumulations at ready call; while the character and range of his work as a writer, during the nineteen years of his American life, may be seen by a glance over the mere titles of his principal publications: "The Bloody Tenet

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[1] Morton, "New England's Memorial," 251–252.

[2] McClure, "Life" of Cotton, 271. [3] "Magnalia," I. 273.

washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb;" "A Brief Exposition upon Ecclesiastes;" "A Brief Exposition upon Canticles;" "The Covenant of Grace;" "An Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation;" "The Grounds and Ends of the Baptism of the Children of the Faithful;" "Of the Holiness of Church Members;" "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven;" "A Modest and Clear Answer to Mr. Ball's Discourse of Set Forms of Prayer;" "The New Covenant;" "A Practical Commentary upon the First Epistle of John;" "Spiritual Milk for Babes;" "A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace as it is dispensed to the Elect Seed;" "The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared;" "The Way of Life;" "A Treatise concerning Predestination."[1]

Let us open, now, any of these old books of John Cotton. At once, the immensity of his contemporaneous influence becomes a riddle to us. In the writings of his great associates, Hooker, Shepard, Peter Bulkley, William Hooke, and Charles Chauncey, at least some threads of immortal light, some lingering movements of a once glorious energy, some half-blurred foot-prints of a departed genius, may still be traced by us, after these two centuries; marks of literary superiority; quotable passages. The same can hardly be said of the writings of John Cotton. These are indeed clear and cogent in reasoning; the language is well enough; but that is all. There are almost no remarkable merits in thought or style. One wanders through these vast tracts and jungles of Puritanic discourse—exposition, exhortation, logic-chopping, theological hair-splitting—and is unrewarded by a single passage of eminent force or beauty, uncheered even by the felicity of a new epithet in the objurgation of sinners, or a new tint in the landscape-painting of hell.

Evidently the vast intellectual and moral force of John Cotton was a thing that could not be handed over to the

[1] The Prince Library Catalogue, prepared by Justin Winsor, 17–18.

printing-press or transmitted to posterity: it had to communicate itself in the living presence of the man himself. The traditions of that living presence are certainly notable. He was of medium size; his hair, brown in early years, with advancing time grew white as snow; and "in his countenance there was an inexpressible sort of majesty, which commanded reverence from all that approached him." Thus the inn-keeper at Derby, having once John Cotton for a guest, very naturally wished him gone from the house; since he "was not able to swear while that man was under his roof."[1] His voice was not powerful, but clear, mellow, sympathetic. One contemporary says that "Mr. Cotton had such an insinuating and melting way in his preaching that he would usually carry his very adversary captive after the triumphant chariot of his rhetoric."[2] But the chariot of his rhetoric ceased to be triumphant when the master himself ceased to drive it.

V.

Such were the three foremost personages among the theological and religious writers of New England, in our first literary period. In the throng of their professional associates—scholars, thinkers, devotees—were not a few others who did famous work in the one form of writing that then suited best the intellectual appetite of the people, and that still preserves best the very form and pressure of that unique time.

One of these men was Peter Bulkley, born in 1583, sometime fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, a man of considerable estate and social position. For twenty-one years he was rector of Woodhill, Bedfordshire; but at last the hand of the terrible archbishop being laid heavily upon him, he came to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1635. The

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[1] "Magnalia," I. 280.

[2] W. Hubbard, "Gen. Hist. N. E." 175.

next year "he carried a good number of planters with him up further into the woods," [1] where they established the town of Concord, and where he abode as pastor until his death in 1659. He was a sufferer from bodily pains; his will was exacting, his temper quick, his tongue sharp; yet in heart and hand he was benignant and bountiful; noted even among Puritans for the superlative stiffness of his Puritanism, his austere looks, his prim dress, his incredible brevity of hair. He was a great scholar too; having, as Cotton Mather saith, "a competently good stroke at Latin poetry," [2] even down to old age blossoming oft into fragrant Latin epigrams. A large place in Puritan literature was held by him in his life-time and long afterward, on account of his book, "The Gospel Covenant, or the Covenant of Grace Opened," made up of a series of systematic sermons preached at Concord, first published in London in 1646; one of those massive, exhaustive, ponderous treatises into which the Puritan theologians put their enormous Biblical learning, their acumen, their industry, the fervor, pathos, and consecration of their lives. It deals with a topic which at that time stirred the minds of all men in New England, which made and unmade reputations, which shook the whole commonwealth. The style, though angular, sharp-edged, carved into formal divisions, and stiff with the embroidery of Scriptural texts, is upon the whole direct and strong. The book has a peculiar interest for us still, on account of its occasional episodes of reference to the mighty things then taking place in England. Near the close of it, is this impressive appeal to the people of New England: "And for ourselves here, the people of New England, we should in a special manner labor to shine forth in holiness above other people. We have that plenty . . . of ordinances and means of grace, as few people enjoy the like. We are as a city set upon an hill, in the open view of all the earth; the eyes of the world are

[1] "Magnalia," I. 400.

[2] Ibid. I. 403.

upon us because we profess ourselves to be a people in covenant with God. . . . Let us study so to walk that this may be our excellency and dignity among the nations of the world. . . . There is no people but will strive to excel in something. What can we excel in, if not in holiness? If we look to number, we are the fewest; if to strength, we are the weakest; if to wealth and riches, we are the poorest of all the people of God through the whole world. We cannot excel, nor so much as equal, other people in these things; and if we come short in grace and holiness too, we are the most despicable people under heaven. . . . Be we an holy people, so shall we be honorable before God, and precious in the eyes of his saints." [1]

The whole work carries momentum with it. It gives the impression of an athletic, patient, and orderly intellect. Every advance along the page is made with the tread of logical victory. No unsubdued enemies are left in the rear. It is a monumental book. It stands for the intellectual robustness of New England in the first age. It is an honor to that community of pioneers, drudging in the woods of Concord, that these profound and elaborate discourses could have been produced, and endured, among them.

Another man deserving at least a glance from posterity is John Norton. He came to New England in 1635, being then twenty-nine years of age, a Cambridge scholar, sometime domestic chaplain to Sir William Masham. Soon after his arrival in America he was settled at Ipswich; in 1653 he went to Boston as John Cotton's successor; ten years later he went with Simon Bradstreet to England on an embassy of conciliation to Charles the Second; soon returning he died in 1663. He was remarkable for his early and brilliant attainments as a scholar, the thoroughness of his knowledge of Puritan theology, the multitude of his writings, and his frank advocacy of

[1] "The Gospel Covenant," 431–432.

persecution for all who dared to live in New England without holding orthodox opinions. Longfellow, in his "Tragedy of John Endicott," permits Norton to describe himself as

> "A terror to the impenitent, and Death
> On the pale horse of the Apocalypse
> To all the accursëd race of heretics."[1]

Whosoever peeps into John Norton's writings will note their excessively technical character, the frequency and the hardness of their divisions, their dry and jagged diction. The most readable of his books is "The Life and Death of that deservedly famous man of God, Mr. John Cotton," published in London in 1658. Though promising to be a biography, it has the didactic and hortatory tone of a sermon; the thread of the narrative is strung thick with beads of moralizing; its statements are embellished with citations, from a wide range of history and literature; it abounds in the antitheses that were then in demand.

A thoroughly wholesome personage was William Hooke, a cousin of Oliver Cromwell and brother-in-law of Cromwell's general, Edward Whalley. He was born in 1601; was educated at Trinity College, Oxford; was for many years vicar of Axmouth, Devonshire; was emigrant to America for conscience' sake about the year 1636; was minister of Taunton, Massachusetts, from 1637 to 1644 or 1645; then, for about twelve years was teacher of the church in New Haven; having great inducements to return to England he went thither in 1656, and became chaplain to the Protector, master of the Savoy, and man of influence generally; in 1677, he died and was laid to rest in Bunhill Fields. His life in America made him a true American; and he never ceased to be one, even after his restoration to England, keeping always his interest warm

[1] It by no means diminishes the accuracy of this self-description, that Norton himself had been dead two years at the date assigned to the Tragedy in which he figures as a very lively persecutor.

in American affairs, and his "old brotherly affection"[1] for the young communities there, of which he had been for twenty years a strong and honored member. Not many of his writings ever got into print. Those of them that were printed are sermons, and are of singular interest to us now for their literary merit, and for a certain flavor of American thought and emotion that still lurks in them. Altogether the best is his sermon preached at Taunton, on the twenty-third of July, 1640, "on a day of public humiliation . . . in behalf of our native country in time of feared dangers." As observers of public affairs in England at that time, the people of America had, in their very distance in space, something of the advantage that is given to posterity by distance in time. They were a contemporaneous posterity; they had the knowledge possessed by those who were upon the spot, and the perspective enjoyed by those who were afar off. In that great year, 1640, the men and women of New England saw, perhaps more clearly than did their brethren in the old home, the meaning and the drift of events in England, then rushing forward into tears and blood. This sermon of William Hooke's is a striking instance of their foresight. Its title, "New England's Tears for Old England's Fears," worthily indicates the touching and passionate love for the motherland which the whole sermon breathes. "Old England, dear England still, . . . left indeed by us in our persons, but never yet forsaken in our affections."[2] "There is no land that claims our name but England; . . . there is no nation that calls us countrymen but the English. Brethren, did we not there draw in our first breath? Did not the sun first shine there upon our heads? Did not that land first bear us, even that pleasant island, . . . that garden of the Lord, that paradise?"[3] But before the eyes of the preacher, as he spoke, seemed to be unrolled an appalling

[1] Letter from Hooke, 1671, in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 105.

[2] The sermon, 23.

[3] Ibid. 16.

vision of the scenes that were to be enacted in the old land they had left,—the chaos, havoc, and misery of its oncoming civil war. One picture drawn by him of the horrors of a battlefield, has a realism and an intensity of coloring not easily to be matched in any prose. "Oh, the shrill, ear-piercing clangs of the trumpets, noise of drums, the animating voice of horse-captains and commanders, learned and learning to destroy! . . . Here ride some dead men swagging in their deep saddles; there fall others alive upon their dead horses; death sends a message to those from the mouth of the muskets; these it talks with face to face, and stabs them in the fifth rib. In yonder file there is a man who hath his arm struck off from his shoulder; another by him hath lost his leg; here stands a soldier with half a face; there fights another upon his stumps, and at once both kills and is killed; not far off lies a company wallowing in their sweat and gore; such a man whilst he chargeth his musket is discharged of his life, and falls upon his dead fellow. Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. Death reigns in the field, and is sure to have the day, which side soever falls. In the meanwhile—O formidable!—the infernal fiends follow the camp to catch after the souls of rude nefarious soldiers . . . who fight themselves fearlessly into the mouth of hell, for revenge, for booty, or a little revenue. . . . A day of battle is a day of harvest for the devil."[1]

At least one more of these great New England preachers must be named here, Charles Chauncey, whose early and conspicuous influence upon American letters was such as to suggest to Cotton Mather the freak of calling him our Cadmus:[2] a great man in many ways, in originality, learning, brain-force, physical endurance, zest for work, enthusiasm, eloquence; a man of impetuous and stormy nature, apt to assert himself strongly and to expect immediate as-

[1] The sermon, 20–21.

[2] "Magnalia," I. 464.

sent, lacking somewhat in tact, capable of lapses from heroism and of penitential agonies in consequence thereof. He was a boy of thirteen at Westminster School at the very time of Guy Fawkes's failure to blow up the adjacent parliament-house, and thereby lost his one opportunity of going to heaven or elsewhere in extremely aristocratic company. At Trinity College, Cambridge, Chauncey took his degrees; he became professor of Greek at his Alma Mater; and in 1627 he became vicar of Ware, where, with his views, he had not long to wait before getting into trouble. He sadly objected to the "Book of Sports;" for in that book the clergy were forbidden to preach on Sunday afternoons, and their parishioners were encouraged to employ that happy time in dancing, archery, vaulting, may-games, and other recreations. Chauncey tried to evade the prohibition by filling the Sunday afternoons with a catechetical exercise for old and young; but this arrangement the bishop stamped on, telling him "that catechising was as bad as preaching."[1] In 1635, he got into a new difficulty. He was cited before the High Commission Court for the crime of objecting to a rail around the communion table, and to the act of kneeling in the communion service. For this he was thrown into prison, sentenced to pay heavy costs, and suspended from the ministry till he should recant. At last in open court he did recant, making confession "that kneeling at the receiving of the holy communion is a lawful and commendable gesture, and that a rail set up in the chancel of any church . . . is a decent and convenient ornament."[2] Of this inglorious act Chauncey was soon ashamed; and to the end of his days he lacerated himself for it, even saying in his will that he kept ever before him his "many sinful compliances with . . . vile human inventions, and will-worship, and hell-bred superstitions, and patcheries stitched into the service of the Lord which the English

[1] "Chauncey Memorials," 12.

[2] The whole document given in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 111.

mass-book . . . and the Ordination of Priests . . . are fully fraught withal."[1]

Of course such a man could not then stay in England, except in jail; and he escaped to America, reaching Plymouth in 1638. There he stayed as minister three years. In 1641, he was invited to Scituate, and continued there thirteen years, preaching, teaching, practising medicine, studying many books, and encountering many griefs. Especially did he suffer from the rebuffs of opponents and of extreme poverty. So wretched was the support allowed him that he had to write to a friend, "deest quidem panis." At last, in 1654, Laud being quiet in his grave, and all things in England having a pleasant look for men like Chauncey, he resolved to go back thither; but on his way to the ship in Boston harbor, he was overtaken by an offer of the presidency of Harvard College in place of the noble-minded Henry Dunster, who had been driven from the office on account of his frank avowal of the Baptist heresy.[2] Chauncey, who also had some taint of the same heresy, promised not to avow it, and was inducted into the great office. It proved to be the right place for him; and he filled it with illustrious success, not without sorrows, until his death in 1672 at the age of eighty. He was a great educating force in those years and long afterward. Neither labor nor age could quell his energy. He rose at four o'clock winter and summer; he outdid all his students in devotion to books; "wittily he moderated their disputations and other exercises;"[3] at College prayers he caused a chapter of the

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[1] "Magnalia," I. 467.

[2] Wm. Hubbard, who graduated in President Dunster's first class, says that Dunster might have continued in the presidency "if he had been endowed with that wisdom . . . to have kept his singular opinion to himself, when there was little occasion for venting thereof;" ("Gen. Hist. N. E." 556) a significant remark, throwing some historical day-light upon clerical casuistry in New England in the early days, and suggesting visions of an outward orthodoxy accepted with various mental reservations, about which they prudently held their tongues.

[3] "Magnalia," I. 468.

Hebrew Bible to be read in the morning, and of the Greek Testament in the evening, and upon these he always gave an extemporaneous comment in Latin; to all the students he was father, inspirer, guide; and he greatly helped to fill the land with scholars, gentlemen, and Christians. His old age was of the glorious, gritty kind. His friends begged him not to work so hard; but he gave the proud answer, "Oportet imperatorem stantem mori." One day, in winter, the fellows of the College were leading him toward the chapel where he was to preach; and hoping to dissuade him from the labor, they said, "Sir, you will certainly die in the pulpit." But this, so far from intimidating the grand old man, gave him a new delight; and pressing on more eagerly through the snow-drifts, he exclaimed, "How glad I should be if what you say might prove true!"[1]

His published writings are not many, and all are sermons excepting one—a controversial pamphlet, "Antisynodalia Scripta Americana," 1662. His most important work is a volume of twenty-six sermons, published in London, in 1659, and entitled, "The Plain Doctrine of the Justification of a Sinner in the Sight of God." On the title-page we are told that the doctrine is "explained . . . in a plain . . . and familiar way for the capacity and understanding of the weak and ignorant;" yet the leading title of the book is in Hebrew, the dedication is in Latin, and the discussion well sprinkled with quotations from Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, and with such technical terms as synecdoche, equipollent, and the like. In spite of this, the ideas are indeed as clear as crystal, and are generally stated in English that is vigorous and keen. Though the formality of stiff topical divisions cramps the movement of his style, and denies him room for swing and flight, the author's mind breaks out often with genuine brightness and power. There are strokes of condensed force, flashes of imagination and passionate light, felicities of epi-

[1] "Magnalia," I. 470.

thet and comparison, vivifying words, memorable sayings: "God . . . stabs the wicked as an enemy with his sword, but lances the godly as a surgeon does his patient with the lancet."[1] "As the moon is nearest to the sun when the least light doth outwardly appear; so is God nearest to the godly when they have the least outward light of comfort."[2] "Let all . . . careless wretches know that if justification be a state of blessedness, then their state is a state of cursedness."[3] "We are singing and chanting to the sound of the viol, while God sounds an alarum by the trumpet of war. We are dancing in jollity, while God is marching in battalia. We are drinking in the wine and strong drink, while God is letting out our blood."[4] "If death arrests you, how will you scramble for bail? How will you wish you had pleased God? . . . Oh, leave not that to the last gasp that should be done first. Thou mayest be great and rich and honorable, and yet not fit to live nor to die; but he that is justified is fit for both."[5] "It was unknown torment that our Saviour underwent. He encountered both the Father's wrath . . . and entered the lists with Satan and all the powers of darkness. . . . All the devils in hell were up in arms, and issued out of their gates; principalities and powers are all let loose against the Redeemer of the world."[6] "Then let us pursue our sins with all possible detestations. . . . Let us stab them to the heart, till they bleed their last, that drew the blood of Christ."[7]

The works of President Chauncey that were published, formed but a small portion of those that he wrote. His manuscripts descended to his eldest son, thence to his grandson, who dying left them in possession of his widow. This lady subsequently married again; and her new husband, a godly man, to wit, a deacon and pie-maker of Northampton, straightway proceeded to utilize the learned

[1] "The Plain Doctrine," etc. 64. [2] Ibid. 96. [3] Ibid. 42.
[4] Ibid. 43. [5] Ibid. 46. [6] Ibid. 55. [7] Ibid. 84.

labors of the deceased president of Harvard, by putting those manuscripts at the bottom of his pies in the oven; and thus the eloquent and valuable writings of Charles Chauncey were gradually used up, their numerous Hebrew and Greek quotations, and their peppery Calvinism, doubtless adding an unwonted relish and indigestibility to the pies under which they were laid.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW ENGLAND: MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WRITERS.

I.—Nathaniel Ward and his collisions with Laud—His position in early American literature—His large experience before coming to America—A reminiscence of Prince Rupert.

II.—Career of Nathaniel Ward in New England—His "Simple Cobbler of Agawam"—Summary of the book—The author's mental traits—His attitude toward his age—Vindicates New England from the calumny that it tolerates variety of opinions—His satire upon fashionable dames in the colony and upon long-haired men—His discussion of the troubles in England—Literary traits of the book.

III.—Roger Williams as revealed in his own writings—His exceptional attractiveness as an early New-Englander—What he stood for in his time in New England—A troublesome personage to his contemporaries and why—His special sympathy with Indians and with all other unfortunate folk.

IV.—First visit of Roger Williams to England—His first book—His interest in the great struggle in England—His reply to John Cotton's justification of his banishment from Massachusetts—His book against a national church—His "Bloody Tenet of Persecution"—John Cotton's reply—Williams's powerful rejoinder—Other writings—His letters—Personal traits shown in them—His famous letter against lawlessness and tyranny.

I.

In the year 1631, William Laud, Bishop of London, faithfully harrying his diocese in search of ministers who might be so insolent as to deviate from his own high standard of doctrine and ceremony, became aware of the presence, in one of his parishes, of an extremely uncomfortable parson named Nathaniel Ward, rector of Stondon Massey, Essex. Accordingly, on the twelfth of December of that year, this parson was brought before the bishop for inspection. Though he escaped that time, the bishop kept his inexorable eye upon him, and frequently thereafter cited him into his presence; and at last, in 1633, "left him

under the sentence of excommunication."[1] This man, thus turned loose upon the world by the ungentle help of his bishop, naturally found his way very soon to New England, where arriving in 1634 he remained twelve years, and where by his incisive and stiff opinions, the weight of his unusual legal learning, his skill and pungency as a writer, and the flavor of his piquant individuality, he considerably influenced contemporary events, stamped some of his own features upon the jurisprudence of Massachusetts, and connected himself with our early literature by the composition of a book the most eccentric and amusing that was produced in America during the colonial period.

Perhaps no other Englishman who came to America in those days, brought with him more of the ripeness that is born, not only of time and study, but of distinguished early associations, extensive travel in foreign lands, and varied professional experience at home. He was graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1603, and is named by Fuller among the learned writers of that college who were not fellows. He at first entered the profession of the law, which he practised several years; he then spent several years upon the continent; and upon his return to England took holy orders, and was settled in the parish from which, after about ten years, he was ejected by Laud. His personal and professional standing may be partly inferred from his acquaintance with Sir Francis Bacon, with Archbishop Usher, and with the famous theologian of Heidelberg, David Paræus. It was during his residence upon the continent, that he was brought into relations of some sort with the family of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James the First, and wife of Frederick, elector Palatine; and in this way he came to have that immediate contact with infantile royalty which many years later suggested a characteristic passage in the book that we are soon to inspect. He took into his arms the young child

[1] Laud, quoted in J. W. Dean, "Memoir" of Ward, 39.

of Frederick and Elizabeth; and when, long afterward, that young child had expanded into the impetuous, swearing cavalier hero of the English civil war, the terrible Prince Rupert, the good old Puritan preacher, Nathaniel Ward, then far away beyond the sea in America, wrote of him these serious words: "I have had him in my arms; . . . I wish I had him there now. If I mistake not, he promised then to be a good prince; but I doubt he hath forgot it. If I thought he would not be angry with me, I would pray hard to his Maker to make him a right Roundhead, a wise-hearted Palatine, a thankful man to the English; to forgive all his sins, and at length to save his soul, notwithstanding all his God-damn-me's."[1]

II.

Soon after his arrival in Massachusetts Nathaniel Ward became minister to a raw settlement of Puritans at Agawam.[2] His health here soon gave way; and in two or three years he surrendered his pastorate. But a man of so strong and various a culture as he, could not be left idle in New England. He was placed on a commission to form a code of laws for the colony, and in that capacity did some good service. Early in 1645, he commenced writing the remarkable book, "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam," which will keep for him a perpetual place in early American literature. This book appears to have been finished in the latter part of 1646, and was at once transmitted to London for publication, where it came from the press in January, 1647. It had the good fortune to fit the times and the passions of men; it was caught up into instant notice, and ran through four editions within the first year.

"The Simple Cobbler of Agawam" may be described as a prose satire upon what seemed to the author to be the

[1] "Simple Cobbler of Agawam," 66–67.

[2] The beautiful Indian name of that district, afterward foolishly exchanged for Ipswich.

frightful license of new opinions in his time, both in New England and at home; upon the frivolity of women and the long hair of men; and finally upon the raging storm of English politics, in the strife then going forward between sects, parties, parliament, and king. It is a tremendous partisan pamphlet, intensely vital even yet, full of fire, wit, whim, eloquence, sarcasm, invective, patriotism, bigotry. One would have to search long among the rubbish of books thrown forth to the public during those hot and teeming days, to find one more authentically representing the stir, the earnestness, the intolerance, the hope, and the wrath of the times than does this book. Thinly disguising his name under the synonym of Theodore de la Guard, the author speaks of himself as a humble English cobbler in America, quite unable to stick to his last, or to restrain his thoughts from brooding anxiously over the errors, follies, sins, griefs, and perils of his countrymen on both sides of the sea. The title-page is too racy and characteristic a part of the book to be omitted: "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam in America: willing to help 'mend his native country, lamentably tattered both in the upper-leather and sole, with all the honest stitches he can take; and as willing never to be paid for his work by old English wonted pay. It is his trade to patch all the year long gratis. Therefore I pray gentlemen keep your purses. By Theodore de la Guard. 'In rebus arduis ac tenui spe, fortissima quaeque consilia tutissima sunt.' Cic. In English:

> When boots and shoes are torn up to the lefts,
> Cobblers must thrust their awls up to the hefts;
> This is no time to fear Apelles' gramm:
> 'Ne sutor quidem ultra crepidam.'

London: Printed by J. D. and R. I. for Stephen Bowtell, at the sign of the Bible in Pope's Head Alley, 1647."

The assumed character of a humble cobbler digressing from his vocation of mending shoes to that of mending commonwealths, is one which the author succeeds in maintaining only upon the title-page and in certain formal

divisions of his work: as where he puts on "a most humble heel-piece to the most honorable head-piece, the parliament of England;"[1] or where he drives in "half a dozen plain, honest, country hobnails, such as the martyrs were wont to wear."[2] In the body and tissue of the work, however, he makes no effort to write like a cobbler; on the contrary, in nearly every paragraph, the irrepressible individuality of Nathaniel Ward, Puritan gentleman, scholar, lawyer, clergyman, and bigot, urges itself to the surface in language which has the authenticity of a mental photograph.

The key-note of the entire work is struck in the opening sentence: "Either I am in an apoplexy, or that man is in a lethargy, who doth not now sensibly feel God shaking the heavens over his head and the earth under his feet. . . . The truths of God are the pillars of the world, whereon states and churches may stand quiet if they will; if they will not, he can easily shake them off into delusions and distractions enough." The remainder of the book is but an evolution and a reverberation of these two statements.

It must be admitted, on the evidence of this book, that Nathaniel Ward was a grumbler—a sincere, witty, and valiant grumbler. Everything and everybody seemed to him to be going wrong. The times were out of joint. "Sathan is now in his passions; . . . he loves to fish in roiled waters."[3] And the difficulty between Nathaniel Ward and the age he lived in, arose from the not uncommon fact that he shrank from the consequences of his own ideas. He was one of those unhappy persons with the brain of a radical and the temperament of a conservative. His own dissent from the teachings of the church on matters of doctrine and ceremony was incipient radicalism; but he failed to remember that having once set up reason against authority on some topics, it was illogical for him to deny to reason its dispute with authority upon all topics. He had himself been ejected for not conforming to the

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[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 82. [2] Ibid. 85. [3] Ibid. 1.

standard of Bishop Laud; and while crying out against that as an injustice, he was still prepared to eject all who did not conform to his own standard. Looking out over English Christendom, he saw nothing but a chaos of jangling opinions, upstart novelties, lawless manners, illimitable changes in codes, institutions, and creeds. All this filled him with alarm. It seemed to him that the Almighty was raining discord and confusion upon the earth in punishment for its departure from the truth—the truth as held by Nathaniel Ward. What was to be done? His book answers the question with a three-fold remedy. First, the exact truth must be announced, and no toleration shown to the wretches who might dispute it. Second, the sports, fashions, vanities, frivolities of men and women must be extinguished in a universal enforcement of Puritan primness and asceticism. Finally, there must be a speedy cessation of warfare in England, through a general agreement to purity and justice in church and state.

We shall find the discussion of the first subject, upon the whole, the most enjoyable. Hardly anything could be conceived more racy, frank, or droll, than the childlike ingenuousness with which the author deals out ferocious declamations against freedom of opinion, or gibbets the doctrine of religious toleration as the most damnable treason and blasphemy. Here, indeed, is the undisguised and undiluted logic of persecution for the crime of free thought. The fathers of the inquisition might have reveled over the first twenty-five pages of this Protestant book, that actually blaze with the eloquent savagery and rapture of religious intolerance. He desires at the outset to repel the infamous calumny that had somehow got abroad in old England, and that represented New England as a place where diversity of opinions was tolerated: "We have been reputed a colluvies of wild opinionists swarmed into a remote wilderness, to find elbow-room for our fanatic doctrines and practices. I trust our diligence past, and constant sedulity against such persons and courses, will

plead better things for us. I dare take upon me to be the herald of New England so far as to proclaim to the world, in the name of our colony, that all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other enthusiasts, shall have free liberty—to keep away from us; and such as will come—to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better." But though so foul a shame as religious toleration does not attach to New England, he confesses that there is an English colony, planted in a certain "West Indian Island," where are provided "free stable-room and litter for all kind of consciences, be they never so dirty or jadish," and where things have reached so vile a pass that it is "actionable, yea, treasonable, to disturb any man in his religion, or to discommend it, whatever it be." This, he tells us, is "profaneness;" it is laying "religious foundations on the ruin of true religion; which strictly binds every conscience to contend earnestly for the truth, to preserve unity of spirit, faith, and ordinances, to be all like-minded, of one accord; every man to take his brother into his Christian care, to stand fast with one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and by no means to permit heresies or erroneous opinions. . . . Irregular dispensations dealt forth by the facilities of men, are the frontiers of error, the redoubts of schism, the perilous irritaments of carnal and spiritual enmity. My heart hath naturally detested four things: the standing of the Apocrypha in the Bible, foreigners dwelling in my country to crowd our native subjects into the corners of the earth, alchemized coins, tolerations of divers religions or of one religion in segregant shapes. . . . Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world. . . . To authorize an untruth by a toleration of state, is to build a sconce against the walls of heaven, to batter God out of his chair. To tell a practical lie is a great sin, but yet transient; but to set up a theorical untruth is to warrant every lie that lies from its root to the top of every branch it hath, which are not a few! . . . He that is willing to tolerate any religion or discrepant

way of religion, besides his own, unless it be in matters merely indifferent, either doubts of his own, or is not sincere in it. He that is willing to tolerate any unsound opinion, that his own may also be tolerated, though never so sound, will for a need hang God's Bible at the Devil's girdle. . . . That state that will give liberty of conscience in matters of religion, must give liberty of conscience and conversation in their moral laws, or else the fiddle will be out of tune, and some of the strings crack. . . . There is talk of an universal toleration. I would talk as loud as I could against it, did I know," he adds with solemn irony, "what more apt and reasonable sacrifice England could offer to God for his late performing all his heavenly truths, than an universal toleration of all hellish errors; or how they shall make an universal reformation, but by making Christ's academy the Devil's university, where any man may commence heretique 'per saltum,' where he that is 'filius diabolicus' or 'simpliciter pessimus' may have his grace to go to hell 'cum publico privilegio,' and carry as many after him as he can. . . . It is said though a man have light enough himself to see the truth, yet if he hath not enough to enlighten others, he is bound to tolerate them. I will engage myself that all the devils in Britannia shall sell themselves to their shirts, to purchase a lease of this position for three of their lives, under the seal of the parliament. It is said that men ought to have liberty of their conscience, and that it is persecution to debar them of it. . . . Let all the wits under the heavens lay their heads together and find an assertion worse than this (one excepted) I will petition to be chosen the universal idiot of the world."[1] Then, glancing across the sea toward England, and reflecting upon the happy tidings which had reached him of the Presbyterian ascendency there, he congratulates his brethren upon the goodly prospect of realizing in that country also this iron-clamped paradise of uniformity in opinions

[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 3–12.

—opinions beaten into one shape by the sledge-hammer of the law: "I am rather glad to hear the Devil is breaking up house in England, and removing somewhither else. Give him leave to sell all his rags and odd-ends by the outcry; and let his petty chapmen make their market while they may: upon my poor credit it will not last long. . . . Fear nothing, gentlemen; . . . ye have turned the Devil out of doors; fling all his old parrel after him out at the windows, lest he makes an errand for it again." Having thus launched out into the pleasant task of giving advice, he continues to lavish it upon his readers under no less than ten heads. For example, he warns young men against the deadly risk of even listening to errorists: "Their breath is contagious, their leprey spreading. . . . He usually hears best in their meetings, that stops his ears closest; he opens his mouth to best purpose, that keeps it shut; and he doeth best of all, that declines their company as wisely as he may. . . . Here I hold myself bound to set up a beacon to give warning of a new-sprung sect of phrantastics, which would persuade themselves and others that they have discovered the Nor-West passage to Heaven. These wits of the game cry up and down in corners such bold ignotions of a new gospel, new Christ, new faith, and new gay-nothings, as trouble unsettled heads, querulous hearts, and not a little grieve the Spirit of God. I desire all good men may be saved from their lunatic creed by infidelity; and rather believe these torrid overtures will prove in time nothing but horrid raptures down to the lowest hell, from which he that would be delivered, let him avoid these blasphemers, a late fry of croaking frogs, not to be endured in a religious state; no, if it were possible, not an hour. . . . Since I knew what to fear, my timorous heart hath dreaded three things: a blazing star appearing in the air; a state-comet, I mean a favorite, rising in a kingdom; a new opinion spreading in religion."[1]

[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 13–21.

As the author comes within sight of the end of his diatribe against toleration, he bethinks him of his purpose "to speak a word to the women anon;" and being conscious of a good deal of pent-up invective within himself upon that subject, he thinks it merciful to stop and notify the women of what they are to expect: "in the meantime I entreat them to prepare patience." Notwithstanding this note of warning, the reader is quite unlikely to be prepared for the untempered fury, at once merciless and mannerless, with which this clerical barbarian proceeds to buffet the fashionable dames of the period. He explains why he treats of them in a separate division of the book: it is because they are "deficients or redundants, not to be brought under any rule;" and, besides, he "was loath to pester better matter with such stuff." Having decided, notwithstanding their insignificance, to give them a small corner in his book, he then makes bold "for this once to borrow a little of their loose-tongued liberty, and misspend a word or two upon their long-waisted but short-skirted patience." "I honor the woman that can honor herself with her attire; a good text always deserves a fair margent;" but as for a woman who lives but to ape the newest court-fashions, "I look at her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher, the epitome of nothing; fitter to be kicked, if she were of a kickable substance, than either honored or humored. To speak moderately, I truly confess, it is beyond the ken of my understanding to conceive how those women should have any true grace or valuable virtue, that have so little wit as to disfigure themselves with such exotic garbs, as not only dismantles their native, lovely lustre, but transclouts them into gaunt bar-geese, ill-shapen shotten shell-fish, Egyptian hieroglyphics, or at the best into French flirts of the pastry, which a proper English woman should scorn with her heels. It is no marvel they wear drails on the hinder part of their heads; having nothing, it seems, in the forepart but a few squirrels' brains to help them frisk from one ill-favored

fashion to another. . . . We have about five or six of them in our colony: if I see any of them accidentally, I cannot cleanse my fancy of them for a month after. . . . If any man think I have spoken rather merrily than seriously, he is much mistaken: I have written what I write with all the indignation I can, and no more than I ought."[1]

It is not easy for one of these fierce prophets of Puritanism to pass from invectives against "short-skirted" women, without pouring a few drops of contemptuous ink upon long-haired men: "A short promise is a far safer guard than a long lock; it is an ill distinction which God is loath to look at, and his angels cannot know his saints by. Though it be not the mark of the beast, yet it may be the mark of a beast prepared to slaughter. I am sure men use not to wear such manes; I am also sure soldiers use to wear other marklets . . . in time of battle."[2]

From this point in the book the author passes to the discussion of the troubles in England: "Having done with the upper part of my work, I would now with all humble willingness set on the best piece of sole-leather I have, did I not fear I should break my awl, which though it may be a right old English blade, yet it is but little and weak."[3] He desires "to speak such a word over the sea" as may persuade "to a comely, brotherly, seasonable, and reasonable cessation of arms on both sides," and may put a stop to "these wearisome wars." In the original quarrel between the parliament and the king, he justifies the parliament; and he does not flinch at the avowal of the right of a people to take up arms against their king. To the objection that prayers and tears "are the people's weapons," he replies: "So are swords and pistols, when God and parliaments bid them arm. Prayers and tears are good weapons for them that have nothing but knees and eyes; but most men are made with teeth and nails; only they must neither scratch for liberties nor bite prerogatives,

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[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 25–30. [2] Ibid. 32. [3] Ibid. 32–33.

till they have wept and prayed as God would have them."[1] Yet Nathaniel Ward shrank from extreme democratic conclusions; and while he was willing to fight against the king in the wrong, he preferred to fight for him in the right. He sincerely yearned for the restoration of the king, first to correct opinions, and then to his throne. It seemed to him possible for a wise and courageous statesmanship "to cut an exquisite thread between kings' prerogatives and subjects' liberties of all sorts; so as Cæsar might have his due, and people their share, without such sharp disputes."[2] In pursuing this thought, he reaches at last the determination to make a manly appeal directly to the king himself, telling him with full voice some loyal truths that his courtiers had not courage to mention to him even in a whisper. His prayer to the king, conceived in no truculent spirit, but in that of sincere affection, is in some passages very noble: it has, throughout, a stern eloquence, and the grandeur of overpowering emotion; the author bravely telling the king, "I am resolved to display my unfurled soul in your very face, and to storm you with volleys of love and loyalty."[3]

Upon the whole, "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam" is a droll and pungent bit of early American prose, with many literary offences upon its head: an excessive fondness for antitheses; an untempered enjoyment of quirks and turns and petty freaks of phraseology; the pursuit of puns and metaphors beyond all decorum; the blurring of its sentences with great daubs and patches of Latin quotation; the willing employment of outlandish and uncouth words belonging to no language at all, sometimes huddled together into combinations that defy syntax and set all readers aghast. For example, he will be a bold man who can affirm at sight in what language this sentence is written, or what it means: "If the whole conclave of hell can so compromise exadverse and diametrical contra-

[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 48-49. [2] Ibid. 53. [3] Ibid. 56.

dictions as to compolitize such a multimonstrous maufrey of heteroclites and quicquidlibets quietly, I trust I may say with all humble reverence, they can do more than the senate of heaven."[1] Any one who fairly reads the book, however, may see that the literary sins of its author are sins that he shared with most of the prose writers of his period, on both sides of the ocean; and that in his case they are partly redeemed by the utter sincerity of his work, its invincible ardor and power. In some particulars he was as a writer even superior to the most of his contemporaries; for there are usually in his periods a compactness, a directness, and a brevity not commonly to be seen in the prose style of the seventeenth century, in which vast, involved, amorphous sentences were wont to heave their huge bulks along the page—the verbal mastodons and megatheria of a primitive rhetorical epoch. Besides, Nathaniel Ward had courage of opinion, an unabashed enthusiasm for ideas—his own ideas, frankness, disdain of lisping, finical, and ambiguous utterance, a hearty and high-spirited mirth born of a good conscience and a good digestion, a force of imagination that occasionally uttered itself in a rough but virile and genuine eloquence. Thus, in reproaching his contemporaries for turning away from old truths as if they were "superannuate and sapless, if not altogether antiquate," he exclaims with glorious indignation: "No man ever saw a gray hair on the head or beard of any truth, wrinkle or morphew on its face."[2] His faith in the omnipotence of truth rushes out in dashing phrases of defiance: "Ye will find it a far easier field to wage war against all the armies that ever were or will be on earth, and all the angels of heaven, than to take up arms against any truth of God."[3] Addressing the states-

[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 22-23. [2] Ibid. 23.

[3] Ibid. 75. In writing this true and grand sentence, the author apparently did not observe how perfectly it annihilated his own doctrine against tolerance. Of course, if truth is thus irresistible, it hardly needs the protection of human force, and may be safely left to take care of itself in a free fight with error in all ages and over all the world.

men of England, "the architectors now at work," he makes an appeal, the earnest manliness of which is finely edged by its humor: "Most expert gentlemen, be entreated at length to set our head right on our shoulders, that we may once look upwards and go forwards, like proper Englishmen." [1]

After all, the one great trait in this book which must be to us the most welcome, is its superiority to the hesitant, imitative, and creeping manner that is the sure sign of a provincial literature. The first accents of literary speech in the American forests, seem not to have been provincial, but free, fearless, natural. Our earliest writers, at any rate, wrote the English language spontaneously, forcefully, like honest men. We shall have to search in some later period of our intellectual history to find, if at all, a race of literary snobs and imitators—writers who in their thin and timid ideas, their nerveless diction, and their slavish simulation of the supposed literary accent of the mother-country, make confession of the inborn weakness and beggarliness of literary provincials.

But proud, and nobly self-sufficient, as were the makers of American literature in our first age, they still loved England as their home; and they always spoke of it as such, with a sweet sincerity of passion that has in it both pathos and eloquence. Nathaniel Ward could not help calling England "that most comfortable and renowned island," [2] and "the stateliest island the world hath;" [3] and everywhere he makes it manifest that in leaving England he had not left behind him the tenderest and most patriotic solicitude for England, and for the triumph of the struggling patriots within it: "Go on, therefore, renowned gentlemen; fall on resolvedly, till your hands cleave to your swords, your swords to your enemies' hearts, your hearts to victory, your victories to triumph, your triumphs to the everlasting praise of Him that hath given

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[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 36. [2] Ibid. 25. [3] Ibid. 57.

you spirits to offer yourselves willingly, and to jeopard your lives in high perils, for his name and service' sake. And we, your brethren, though we necessarily abide beyond Jordan, and remain on the American sea-coasts, will send up armies of pravers to the throne of Grace that the God of power and goodness would encourage your hearts, cover your heads, strengthen your arms, pardon your sins, save your souls, and bless your families, in the day of battle. We will also pray that the same Lord of Hosts would discover the counsels, defeat the enterprises, deride the hopes, disdain the insolencies, and wound the hairy scalps of your obstinate enemies, and yet pardon all that are unwillingly misled." [1]

III.

ROGER WILLIAMS, never in anything addicted to concealments, has put himself without reserve into his writings. There he still remains. There if anywhere we may get well acquainted with him. Searching for him along the two thousand printed pages upon which he has stamped his own portrait, we seem to see a very human and fallible man, with a large head, a warm heart, a healthy body, an eloquent and imprudent tongue; not a symmetrical person, poised, cool, accurate, circumspect; a man very anxious to be genuine and to get at the truth, but impatient of slow methods, trusting gallantly to his own intuitions, easily deluded by his own hopes; an imaginative, sympathetic, affluent, impulsive man; an optimist; his master-passion benevolence; his mind clarifying itself slowly; never quite settled on all subjects in the universe; at almost every moment on the watch for some new idea about that time expected to heave in sight; never able by the ordinary means of intellectual stagnation to win for himself in his life-time the bastard glory of doctrinal consistency; professing many things by turn and nothing

[1] "The Simple Cobbler," etc. 77.

long, until at last, even in mid-life, he reached the moral altitude of being able to call himself only a Seeker—in which not ignoble creed he continued for the remainder of his days on earth.

It must be confessed that there is even yet in the fame of Roger Williams a singular vitality. While living in this world, it was his fate to be much talked about, as well as to disturb much the serenity of many excellent people; and the rumor of him still agitates and divides men. There are, in fact, some signs that his fame is now about to take out a new lease, and to build for itself a larger habitation. At any rate, the world, having at last nearly caught up with him, seems ready to vote—though with a peculiarly respectable minority in opposition—that Roger Williams was after all a great man, one of the true heroes, seers, world-movers, of these latter ages.

Perhaps one explanation of the pleasure which we take in now looking upon him, as he looms up among his contemporaries in New England, may be that the eye of the observer, rather fatigued by the monotony of so vast a throng of sages and saints, all quite immaculate, all equally prim and stiff in their Puritan starch and uniform, all equally automatic and freezing, finds a relief in the easy swing of this man's gait, the limberness of his personal movement, his escape from the paste-board proprieties, his spontaneity, his impetuosity, his indiscretions, his frank acknowledgments that he really had a few things yet to learn. Somehow, too, though he sorely vexed the souls of the judicious in his time, and evoked from them words of dreadful reprehension, the best of them loved him; for indeed this headstrong, measureless man, with his flashes of Welsh fire, was in the grain of him a noble fellow; "a man," as Edward Winslow[1] said, "lovely in his carriage." Evidently he was of a hearty and sociable turn, and had the gift of friendship. Some of the choicest

[1] "Hypocrisy Unmasked," 65.

spirits of that age were knit to him in a brotherly way, particularly the two Winthrops, John Milton, and Sir Henry Vane. Writing, in the winter of 1660, to the younger Winthrop, Roger Williams says: "Your loving lines in this cold, dead season were as a cup of your Connecticut cider, which we are glad to hear abounds with you, or of that western metheglin which you and I have drunk at Bristol together."[1] Here, indeed, was an early New-Englander that one could still endure to have an hour with, particularly at Bristol; in truth, a clubable person; a man whose dignity would not have petrified us, nor his saintliness have given us a chill.

From his early manhood even down to his late old age, Roger Williams stands in New England a mighty and benignant form, always pleading for some magnanimous idea, some tender charity, the rectification of some wrong, the exercise of some sort of forbearance toward men's bodies or souls. It was one of his vexatious peculiarities, that he could do nothing by halves—even in logic. Having established his major and his minor premises, he utterly lacked the accommodating judgment which would have enabled him to stop there and go no further whenever it seemed that the concluding member of his syllogism was likely to annoy the brethren. To this frailty in his organization is due the fact that he often seemed to his contemporaries an impracticable person, presumptuous, turbulent, even seditious. This it was that tainted somewhat the pleasantness of his relations with the colony of Massachusetts during his residence in it. For example, he had taken orders in the established church of England, but had subsequently come to the conclusion that an established church was necessarily a corrupt organization. He acted logically. He went out of it. He would hold no fellowship with it, even remotely or by implication. He became an uncompromising Separatist. Furthermore, on

[1] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 306.

arriving in New England, the same uncomfortable propensity was put into action, by the spectacle of the white men helping themselves freely to the lands of the red men, and doing so on pretence of certain titles derived from a white king on the other side of the Atlantic. He was unable to see that even so great a monarch as the king of England could give away what did not belong to him. To Roger Williams it appeared that these lands actually belonged to the red men who lived on them; hence, that the white men's titles to them ought to come from the red men, and to be the result of a genuine and fair bargain with the red men. Thus, he became an assailant of the validity, in that particular, of the New England charters. It happened, moreover, that his views in both these directions constituted offences, just then, for the colony of Massachusetts, extremely inopportune and inconvenient. But these were not his only offences. Roger Williams also held that it was a shocking thing—one of the abominations of the age—for men who did not even pretend to have religion in their hearts, to be muttering publicly the words of religion with their mouths; and that such persons ought not to be called on to perform any acts of worship, even the taking of an oath. Finally, he held another doctrine—at that time and in that place sadly eccentric and disgusting—that the power of the civil magistrate "extends only to the bodies and goods and outward state of men," and not at all to their inward state, their consciences, their opinions. For these four crimes, particularly mentioned by Governor Haynes in pronouncing sentence upon him, Massachusetts deemed it unsafe to permit such a nefarious being as Roger Williams to abide anywhere within her borders.

With respect to the sympathy of Roger Williams with the Indians, it concerns us, at present, to note that it did not exhaust itself in the invention of a legal opinion on their behalf: throughout his whole life, early and late, he put himself to much downright toil and self-denial for

their benefit, both in body and in soul. He and John Eliot had come to New England in the same year, 1631; but at least a dozen years before John Eliot had entered upon his apostolic labors among the Indians,[1] Roger Williams had lodged "with them in their filthy, smoky holes . . . to gain their tongue,"[2] and had preached to them in it. "My soul's desire," he said, "was to do the natives good."[3] Later, he knew from his own experience, that it was possible for the English to live at peace with the Indians; when, however, that peace was broken, though he wished the English to acquit themselves manfully and successfully, he evermore stood between them and their vanquished foes, with words of compassion. In 1637, amid the exasperation caused by the Pequot war, the voice of Roger Williams was heard imploring the victors to spare. "I much rejoice," he writes to the governor of Massachusetts, "that . . . some of the chiefs at Connecticut, . . . are almost adverse from killing women and children. Mercy outshines all the works and attributes of Him who is the Father of Mercies."[4] In another letter he expresses the hope that all Christians who receive as slaves the surviving Pequots, may so treat them "as to make mercy eminent."[5] In still another letter he invokes mercy upon the miserable Pequots, "since the Most High delights in mercy, and great revenge hath been already taken."[6] This, to the end of his life, was his one cry in the midst of all storms of popular wrath and revenge.[7]

And the benignity of Roger Williams was large enough to go out toward other people than the Indians. His letters, public and private, are a proof that the sight of any creature in trouble, was enough to stir his heart and his hand for quick relief. His best clients appear to have

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[1] J. Hammond Trumbull, Pref. to R. W.'s "Key," etc. 3–6.
[2] Quoted in J. D. Knowles, "Mem. of R. W." 109.
[3] Ibid. 108.
[4] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 36.
[5] Ibid. 80.
[6] Ibid. 87-88. See also 34, 35, 44, 47, 54.
[7] See his noble letter, ibid. 269–276.

been those who had no other advocate, and who could pay no fees: poor people; sick ones; wanderers;[1] "the dead, the widows, and the fatherless;"[2] and, especially, all who had been turned adrift for the crime of having an independent thought. Nay, his generosity threw its arms not only around those who were then actually unfortunate, but even around those who might ever become so; and for them, too, he tried to make tender provision. In 1662, the people of Providence resolved to divide among themselves the lands that still remained common. When Roger Williams heard of this, he wrote a warm-hearted and moving appeal to them, as his "loving friends and neighbors," beseeching them that as he first gave to them all the lands, so they would permit some to remain unappropriated, as a possession in reserve for such homeless persons as, driven from any country for conscience' sake, might thereafter flee to them for refuge: "I earnestly pray the town to lay to heart, as ever they look for a blessing from God on the town, on your families, your corn and cattle, and your children after you, . . . that after you have got over the black brook of some soul-bondage yourselves, you tear not down the bridge after you, by leaving no small pittance for distressed souls that may come after you."[3]

IV.

In the early part of the year 1643, the four colonies, Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven, formed themselves into a snug confederacy called The United Colonies of New England, from which very naturally Rhode Island was excluded,—an incident that reminded the latter in a lively way of its perfect isolation among the peoples of this earth. As it had no recognized

[1] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 212, 213.
[2] Ibid. 208. See also entire letter, 206–209.
[3] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 318.

connection with its sister-colonies, so it had none with the mother-country. At once, it resolved to procure for itself such civic respectability as could be conveyed by a charter from England; and it summoned its foremost citizen, Roger Williams, to go thither and get it. This command he promptly obeyed, taking ship that very summer, not from Boston—in whose streets he was forbidden to set his foot—but from the friendly Dutch port of New Amsterdam. It was upon this long and leisurely sea-voyage, that he composed his first book, "A Key into the Language of America: or, An help to the language of the natives in that part of America called New England," which was given to the press soon after his arrival in London.[1] This work is primarily a phrase-book of the language of certain Indian tribes; but it is much more than that. Indeed, it is a most suggestive and racy description of those Indians themselves. Each chapter groups together the words pertaining to some one topic; with each group of words are connected comments, brief, pithy, instructive; at the end of each chapter is a series of verses upon its prevailing topic; and through all, whether in verse or prose, runs a gentle and liberal tone, that note of magnanimity, compassion, personal freedom and freshness, to be heard all along the life of this man. For instance, at the end of the chapter which gathers the words of salutation, is this stanza:

> "If nature's sons, both wild and tame,
> Humane and courteous be,
> How ill becomes it sons of God
> To want humanity!" [2]

In the chapter giving the words of entertainment is this comment: "It is a strange truth that a man shall generally find more free entertainment and refreshing amongst these barbarians, than amongst thousands that call them-

[1] Reprinted in Narr. Club Pub. I. 1–222, and there edited by J. Hammond Trumbull.

[2] Ibid. 39.

selves Christians;"[1] and he hints gratefully at the hospitality he had found among American savages even when he had experienced some lack of it among his own countrymen:

> "God's providence is rich to his,
> Let none distrustful be;
> In wilderness, in great distress,
> These ravens have fed me."[2]

Even in a book like this, he continually returns to themes of pity, forbearance, and faith, as if these were the chorus to his own psalm of life; and he sees among the wild beasts of the American forests, some traits that should shame Christians out of their ferocity and meanness: "The wilderness is a clear resemblance of the world, where greedy and furious men persecute and devour the harmless and innocent, as the wild beasts pursue and devour the hinds and roes."[3] "The wolf is an emblem of a fierce, blood-sucking persecutor; the swine of a covetous, rooting worldling. Both make a prey of the Lord Jesus in his poor servants."[4]

Upon reaching England, he of course found the country upheaved and aflame in civil war, John Hampden having not long before fallen in the fight. In such a controversy, the sympathy of Roger Williams could only be with the party that stood for some widening of human horizons; and though he never lost sight of the particular business that brought him to England, it was impossible for him even there to see so interesting a quarrel in progress and not take a hand in it. His participation in the strife was in two ways, the one physical, the other intellectual; both significant of the humane and efficient nature of him. First, as the winter came on, the poor of London began to suffer for want of fuel, and even to rise in mutiny,—the supply of coals from Newcastle having been cut off. This suggested to Roger Williams something to do. His

[1] "Key," etc. 46. [2] Ibid. 46. [3] Ibid. 130. [4] Ibid. 191.

American experience had taught him that there were several ways by which men could keep warm in an emergency; and he at once put himself into the service of parliament for the supply of firewood to the shivering folk of the great city. But the intellectual aspects of the contest in England probably interested him even more than did its physical ones. It grieved him to think of men's bodies shivering with cold: it grieved him far worse to think of their souls shivering with fear; and doubtless the one result that he hoped for out of all the havoc of those times, was that men would learn to abhor what he called the "body-killing, soul-killing, and state-killing doctrine"[1] of persecuting one another for their differences in opinion. At last, this had become his master-thought. Even upon the ocean, and while compiling a mere Indian vocabulary, he had been unable, as we have seen, to keep this great thought from thrusting itself forward among his word-lists; and it happened that, so long as he stayed in England, there came to him occasions for its more explicit utterance. He had not been a great while upon shore when, oddly enough, there appeared in print, in London, a letter which the celebrated John Cotton had written to him six years before, adroitly justifying the banishment of Roger Williams from Massachusetts. This letter it was fitting that Roger Williams should take notice of; and his notice of it swiftly came in the form of a little book, called "Mr. Cotton's Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered;"[2] a manly and self-restrained piece of work, giving frankly his own side of the story, emitting an occasional jet of indignation at the harshness of the treatment that had been visited upon him, and standing by every one of the ideas for which he had been driven, in midwinter, from his home and friends, into the wilderness: "I . . . hope that

[1] Narr. Club Pub. I. 328.

[2] First printed, London, 1644, and reprinted in Narr. Club Pub. I. 313–396. Cotton's "Letter" is also printed in the same volume.

as I then maintained the rocky strength of them, . . . so through the Lord's assistance I shall be ready for the same grounds, not only to be bound and banished, but to die also in New England."[1] At the very time when, in both Englands, many of the greatest divines, both among the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, were outspoken for the suppression of heresy by force, denouncing the word toleration as a word of infamy, Roger Williams declared it to be "a monstrous paradox, that God's children should persecute God's children, and that they that hope to live eternally together with Christ Jesus in the heavens, should not suffer each other to live in this common air together."[2] "Persecutors of men's bodies," he exclaimed, "seldom or never do these men's souls good."[3]

He had not long finished his answer to John Cotton when he saw need to speak forth again. Standing in the thick of the strifes that then engaged all Englishmen, viewing them with his American eyes and from his American experience, he was able to discern, better than most Englishmen could do, the inevitable drift of things, and to give resounding forenotice of some dangers ahead. The illustrious Westminster Assembly of Divines had been in session since July, 1643. Already the Presbyterians in it had come to hard blows with the Congregationalists in it, with respect to the form of church government to be erected in England upon the ruins of the Episcopacy. On that subject Roger Williams had a very distinct opinion. While some were for having the new national church of this pattern, and others were for having it of that, Roger Williams boldly stepped two or three centuries ahead of his age, and affirmed that there should be no national church

[1] Narr. Club Pub. I. 324–325, where he cites the four charges against him as summed up by Governor Haynes. In defence of Massachusetts for its treatment of Roger Williams, all that can be fairly urged by the utmost learning and the utmost ingenuity has been urged by Henry Martyn Dexter, in his powerful monograph, "As To Roger Williams."

[2] Narr. Club Pub I. 319. [3] Ibid. 327–328.

at all. Putting his arguments into the deferential form of mere questions, he published, in 1644, what he called "Queries of Highest Consideration."[1] The introduction to this little book is a direct address to both houses of parliament, and speaks to them with the noble Miltonic accent: "Most renowned patriots, you sit at helm in as great a storm as e'er poor England's commonwealth was lost in; yet be you pleased to remember that, excepting the affairs . . . of religion, . . . all your consultations, conclusions, executions, are not of the quantity of the value of one poor drop of water. . . . It shall never be your honor, to this or future ages, to be confined to the patterns of either French, Dutch, Scotch, or New-English churches. . . . If he whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, be consulted, . . . we are confident you shall exceed the acts and patterns of all neighbor nations." Then, in the book itself, turning to the ecclesiastical champions who confronted one another in the Westminster Assembly, he puts to them twelve great questions. These questions pierce to the core of all ecclesiastical disputes then and since then. They contain the germs of all truths that go to the erection upon this earth of a majestic human commonwealth, in which all souls shall be utterly free. Observe the foresight and the glorious audacity of this seventeenth century American: "We query where you now find one footstep, print, or pattern, in this doctrine of the Son of God, for a . . . national church. . . . Again we ask, whether in the constitution of a national church it can possibly be framed without a racking and tormenting of the souls as well as of the bodies of persons. . . . It seems not possible to fit it to every conscience: sooner shall one suit of apparel fit everybody, one law-precedent every case, or one size or last every foot. . . . Whether it be not the cause of a world of hypocrites, the soothing up of people in a formal state-worship to the ruin

[1] Reprinted in Narr. Club Pub. II. 241–275.

of their souls, the ground of persecution to Christ Jesus in his members, and sooner or later the kindling of the devouring flames of civil wars. . . . Since you profess to want more light, and that a greater light is yet to be expected, . . . we query how you can profess and swear to persecute all others as schismatics, heretics, and so forth, that believe they see a further light, and dare not join with either of your churches. . . . Whether . . . it be not a true mark . . . of a false church to persecute; it being the nature only of a wolf to hunt the lambs and sheep, but impossible for a lamb or sheep, or a thousand flocks of sheep to persecute one wolf. . . . Whether there can possibly be expected the least look of peace in these fatal distractions and tempests raised, but by taking counsel of the greatest and wisest politician that ever was, the Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

All this, of course, was stark and dreadful heresy; but it was heresy for which Roger Williams had already suffered loss and pain, and was prepared to suffer more. Whatever were the faults of this man, indifference to the sacred prerogatives of personality was not among them. He could not bear the weight of any fetters upon his own soul; and the spectacle of them upon any other soul, filled him with pity and great wrath. Very likely in his early manhood he had been, both in speech and deed, hot, precipitate, destructive. But, for him, time, meditation, sorrow, solitude, the presence of nature, a larger acquaintance with mankind, had been doing their work, chastening and mellowing him; and though nothing could quench the fire of his spirit, or tame him into a safe, calculating, and conventional person,—pulling judiciously in any regulation-traces,—he had certainly grown in patience, and in the justice which patience gives. Above all, however, his nature had become absolutely clear in its adjustment of certain grand ideas, of which the chief was soul-liberty. On behalf of

[1] Narr. Club Pub. II. 264–274.

that idea, having now an opportunity to free his mind, he resolved to do so, keeping nothing back; and accordingly, almost upon the heels of the little book that has just been mentioned, he sent out another—not a little one; a book of strong, limpid, and passionate argument, glorious for its intuitions of the world's coming wisdom, and in its very title flinging out defiantly a challenge to all comers. He called it "The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience."[1]

This book, which had two editions within its first year, and quickly attained the honor of martyrdom in the flames of a Presbyterian auto-da-fé, was written, the author tells us, while he was busy with his task of procuring fuel for the poor of London, "in change of rooms and corners, yea sometimes . . . in variety of strange houses, sometimes in the fields, in the midst of travel; where he hath been forced to gather and scatter his loose thoughts and papers." It is a treatise in the form of a dialogue, the interlocutors being two angelic and sorrowful fugitives, Truth and Peace, who, after long separations and friendless wanderings over the earth, have at last met in some dusky corner of it, where they confer together mournfully over those errors and passions which blind men, and fill the world with tumult and misery. The conversation between these heavenly personages goes forward at great length, and covers the entire field of the doctrine of intellectual freedom. In the very year in which this book was published, in London, John Milton likewise gave to the public, in the same place, his majestic plea for soul-liberty, "Areopagitica;" but even Milton's vision of this sublime truth had not then acquired the breadth and clearness with which it was revealed to Roger Williams. Milton asks only that "many be tolerated rather than all be compelled," and immediately suggests this fatal limitation: "I mean not

[1] First published, London, 1644. Reprinted in Narr. Club Pub. III 1–425.

tolerated Popery and open superstition, which as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate."[1] How much nobler and more spacious is the declaration of Roger Williams! "It is the will and command of God, that . . . a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or Antichristian consciences and worships, be granted to all men, in all nations and countries; and they are only to be fought against with that sword which is only, in soul-matters, able to conquer, to wit, the sword of God's Spirit, the word of God."[2]

It may be that this great work had not even passed from the hands of the printer, when the author of it, having fully accomplished the business that brought him to England, had set out upon his return to Rhode Island, where he arrived in the autumn of 1644. His book, having likewise set out upon its travels, reached in due time the library of John Cotton, and stirred him up to make a reply, which was published in London in 1647, and which bore a title reverberating that given by Roger Williams to his book: "The Bloody Tenet washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb." Cotton's book quickly found Roger Williams, at his home in Rhode Island, and of course aroused him to write a rejoinder. This he sent to England for publication; but it did not get into print until his own second visit there, in 1652. Its title is a reiteration of that given to his former work, and is likewise a characteristic retort upon the modification of it made by his antagonist: "The Bloody Tenet yet more Bloody, by Mr. Cotton's Endeavor to wash it white in the Blood of the Lamb."[3]

As usual, this book has several prefaces. The first one, addressed "to the most honorable, the parliament of the commonwealth of England," is written with great power. It is a magnificent and soul-stirring appeal, a noble chant

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[1] "Areopagitica," Arber's ed. 76. [2] Narr. Club Pub. III.
[3] Reprinted in Narr. Club Pub. IV. 1–547.

of spiritual liberty, an overture in sonorous word-music to the mighty strain that rolls stormily through the book, an invocation to the rulers of England to practise the magnanimity of a complete enfranchisement of human souls within all the realms swayed by their authority: "O ye, the prime of English men and English worthies, whose senses have so oft perceived the everlasting arms of the invincible and eternal King, when your ship's hold hath been full with water, yea with blood, . . . when she hath beaten upon some rocky hearts and passages as if she would have staved and split into a thousand pieces. Yet this so near . . . foundered, sinking nation, hath the God of heaven, by your most valiant and careful hands, brought safe to peace, her harbor. Why, now, should any duty possible be impossible? Yea, why not impossibilities possible? Why should your English seas contend with a neighbor Dutchman, for the motion of a piece of silk, . . . and not ten thousand fold much more your English spirits with theirs, for the crown of that state-piety and wisdom which may make your faces more to shine, . . . with a glory far transcending all your fairest neighbors' copies. The States of Holland, having smarted deeply and paid so dearly for the purchase of their freedoms, reach to . . . the world a taste of such of their dainties. And yet (with due reverence to so wise a state and with due thankfulness for mercy and relief to many poor oppressed consciences) I say, their piety nor policy could ever yet reach so far, nor could they in all their school of war . . . learn that one poor lesson of setting absolutely the consciences of all men free. . . . But why should not such a parliament as England never had . . . outshoot and teach their neighbors, by framing a safe communication of freedom of conscience in worship, even to . . . the Papists and Arminians themselves? . . . The Pope, the Turk, the King of Spain, the Emperor, and the rest of persecutors, build among the eagles and the stars; yet, while they practise violence to the souls of men and make their swords of steel corrivals with the two-edged

spiritual sword of the Son of God, the basis of their highest pillars, the foundation of their glorious palaces are but dross and rottenness. And however, in our poor arithmetic, their kingdoms' number seem great, yet in the only wise account of the Eternal, their ages are but minutes, and their short periods are near accomplished. . . . But light from the Father of Lights hath shined on your eyes, mercy from the Father of Mercies hath softened your breasts, to be tender of the tenderest part of man, his conscience."[1]

This book is the most powerful of the writings of Roger Williams. Its range of topics is dictated by the line of discussion adopted by John Cotton. There are three principal matters argued in it,—the nature of persecution, the limits of the power of the civil sword, and the tolerance already granted by parliament. Like its author's previous book, this work has an abundance of literary faults. It conforms to the manner of the controversial prose of the seventeenth century: its sentences are often involved, lumbering, diffuse; it is entirely lacking in reticence; it defies proportion; it moves onward and onward in unpruned and boundless loquacity; eternity seems not long enough for the entire perusal of it. Nevertheless, here also are some of the best qualities that can be in a book: ripeness of judgment, uttermost sincerity, all-consuming earnestness, the inspiration of being in the right and of knowing it, the rebound of a strong, generous, and brilliant nature against the thrusts of an able antagonist. Here, in a most benign service, are ample erudition, logic, imagination, noble emotion, humor, pathos, sarcasm, invective, torrents of eager and irresistible speech. The closing passage of this book is, at once, the summary and the climax of all the argument and passion that have enlightened and kindled its pages: a stately, an appalling arraignment, before the tribunal of divine, angelic, and human reason, of

[1] Narr. Club Pub. IV. 9–13.

the doctrine of persecution. Having now, against that doctrine, argued the case in full, and from every point of view; having proved it to be heavy and accursed with the weight of every impolicy and of every crime, the author seems to gather up all his powers of thought, feeling, and utterance for one final onset; and he proceeds to hurl upon the tenet, which he execrates, these fierce, crashing sentences: "And for myself, I must proclaim before the most holy God, angels, and men, that . . . yet this is a foul, a black, and a bloody tenet; a tenet of high blasphemy against the God of peace, the God of order, who hath of one blood made all mankind to dwell upon the face of the earth; . . . a tenet warring against the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus; . . . a tenet fighting against the sweet end of his coming, which was not to destroy men's lives for their religions, but to save them; . . . a tenet lamentably guilty of his most precious blood, shed in the blood of so many hundred thousand of his poor servants by the civil powers of the world, pretending to suppress blasphemies, heresies, idolatries, superstition, and so forth; a tenet fighting against the spirit of love, holiness, and meekness, by kindling fiery spirits of false zeal and fury; . . . a tenet against which the blessed souls under the altar cry aloud for vengeance, this tenet having cut their throats, torn out their hearts, and poured forth their blood, in all ages, as the only heretics and blasphemers in the world; a tenet, which no uncleanness, no adultery, incest, sodomy, or bestiality can equal,—this ravishing and forcing . . . the very souls and consciences of all the nations and inhabitants of the world; . . . a tenet loathsome and ugly . . . with the palpable filths of gross dissimulation and hypocrisy; . . . a tenet that fights against the common principles of all civility, and the very civil being and combinations of men . . . by commixing . . . a spiritual and civil state together; . . . a tenet that kindles the devouring flames of combustions and wars in most nations of the world; . . . a tenet all besprinkled with the bloody murders, stabs, poisonings,

pistollings, powder-plots, and so forth, against many famous kings, princes, and states; . . . a tenet all red and bloody with those most barbarous and tigerlike massacres of so many thousand and ten thousands, formerly in France and other parts, and so lately and so horribly in Ireland; . . . a tenet that stunts the growth and flourishing of the most likely and hopefulest commonweals and countries, . . . a tenet that corrupts and spoils the very civil honesty and natural conscience of a nation; since conscience to God, violated, proves, without repentance, ever after a very jade, a drug, loose and unconscionable in all converse with men; lastly, a tenet in England most unseasonable, as pouring oil upon those flames which the high wisdom of the parliament, by easing the yokes on men's consciences, had begun to quench. In the sad consideration of all which, . . . let heaven and earth judge of the washing and color of this tenet. . . . For me, . . . I must profess, while heaven and earth lasts, that no one tenet that either London, England, or the world, doth harbor, is so heretical, blasphemous, seditious, and dangerous, to the corporal, to the spiritual, to the present, to the eternal good of men, as the bloody tenet (however washed and whited) . . . of persecution for cause of conscience." [1]

With Roger Williams, the mood for composition seems to have come in gusts. His writings are numerous; but they were produced spasmodically and in clusters, amid long spaces of silence. He is known to have written two or three works which were never printed at all, and which are now lost. In 1652, during his second visit to England, he published, in addition to his rejoinder to John Cotton, two small treatises, "The Hireling Ministry None of Christ's," and "Experiments of Spiritual Life and Health." From that time, no book of his was given to the press until the year 1676, when he published at Boston a quarto volume of nearly three hundred and fifty pages,

[1] Narr. Club Pub. IV. 493–501.

embodying his own report of a series of stormy public debates, which he had held in Rhode Island, not long before, with certain robust advocates of Quakerism. This book bears a punning title, "George Fox digged out of his Burrows."[1] By his contemporaries, it was read with intense interest; and it is interesting still, at least for its many local and personal allusions, and as an authentic and unpleasant memorial of the anger, the barbarous discourtesy, the vituperation, with which in those ages even kindly men engaged in intellectual controversy.[2] Most readers nowadays, who may find themselves by chance near this huge book, will gaze down into it for a moment as into some vast tank into which have poured the drippings of a furious religious combat in the olden time,—theological nick-names, blunt-headed words of pious abuse, devout scurrilities, the rancid vocabulary of Puritan billingsgate, that diction of hearty and expressive dislike which Roger Williams himself pleasantly described as "sharp Scripture language."[3]

Besides those of his writings that were intended for books, there are many in the form of letters, some addressed to the public, most of them to his personal friends. In these letters,[4] which cover his whole life from youth to old age, we seem to get very near to the man himself. They are upon all sorts of subjects, often hurriedly written, always cheerful, seldom mirthful; they are full of urbanity, tenderness, generosity; they show an habitual upwardness of mental movement; they grow rich in all gentle, gracious, and magnanimous qualities as the years increase upon him. Especially do they please us by the tokens they furnish of the noble friendships that he was

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[1] Reprinted in Narr. Club Pub. V. 1–503.

[2] Think of the controversial writings of such true-souled gentlemen as Sir Thomas More and John Milton.

[3] For examples of his energetic candor see Narr. Club Pub. V. 84, 193, 203, 226, 227, 233, 243, 366, 417, 491.

[4] Many of them are given in Narr. Club Pub. VI. 1–420.

capable of. His letters to the younger Winthrop are peculiarly affable and tender; nowhere else in his writings do we meet so many passages of benediction and aspiration, sweet, brief phrases of comfort. In one letter he begins with this greeting: "Best respects and love presented to yourself and dearest."[1] In another he says: "Above the sun is our rest, in the Alpha and Omega of all blessedness, unto whose arms of everlasting mercy I commend you."[2] In another he says: "This instant before sunrise as I went to my field," I met "an Indian running back for a glass, bound for your parts;" I use him to carry "this hasty salutation to your kind self and dear companion."[3] In another letter to the same friend, is preserved an amusing reminiscence both of his familiar and thoughtful friendliness, and of a certain imperious domestic necessity that civilization has at last succeeded in making us unconscious of: "Sir, hearing want of pins, I crave Mrs. Winthrop's acceptance of two small papers, that, if she want not herself, she may pleasure a neighbor."[4]

The letters of Roger Williams also show that, to the very end of his days, he kept his mind open and alert to nearly all that was passing among men, at home and abroad, especially in wars, politics, and divinity. Even more vividly than in his books, we see in them likewise the habits of his mind in the grasp and expression of thought. His was not a dry, hard, or acute mind, but sensitive, imaginative, comprehensive, with great fertility of ideas, moved by energies rushing into it from the heart. Evidently he had no objections to laughter, but the humor of his letters is of the lurking and delicate kind; as when he says that Prince Rupert was one "whose name in these parts sounds as a north-east snow-storm,"[5] or when he describes his friend Gregory Dexter as "an intelligent man

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[1] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 200.
[2] Ibid. 174.
[3] Ibid. 319.
[4] Ibid. 200.
[5] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 197–198.

. . . and conscionable (though a Baptist)."[1] All his writings, and especially his letters, abound in quotable sentences, masses of thought heaved to the surface by its own natural action: "Better an honorable death than a slave's life."[2] "I fear not so much iron and steel as the cutting of our throats with golden knives."[3] "Oh, how sweet is a dry morsel and a handful, with quietness from earth and heaven."[4] "The counsels of the Most High are deep concerning us poor grasshoppers hopping and skipping from branch to twig in this vale of tears."[5] In the moral perspectives of life he has some notable sayings. He speaks of "the vain and empty puff of all terrene promotions;"[6] and of "that life which is eternal when this poor minute's dream is over."[7] "Alas, sir, in calm midnight thoughts, what are these leaves and flowers, and smoke and shadows, and dreams of earthly nothings, about which we poor fools and children, as David saith, disquiet ourselves in vain."[8] "In my poor span of time, I have been oft in the jaws of death, sickening at sea, shipwrecked on shore, in danger of arrows, swords, and bullets; and yet, methinks, the most high and most holy God hath reserved me for some service to his most glorious and eternal majesty."[9]

Finally, he conceived truth in its concrete forms; his propositions were often uttered in images; he could settle a long debate by the authority of a luminous comparison. A noble example of this habit of his mind, is that celebrated letter to the people of Providence, written by him, in 1655, as President of Rhode Island, with the purpose of correcting a perversion, just then attempted, of his own strong championship of soul-liberty: "There goes many a ship to sea, with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common, and is a true picture of a com-

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[1] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 332.
[2] Ibid. 15.
[3] Ibid. 15.
[4] Ibid. 165.
[5] Ibid. 158–159.
[6] Ibid. 101.
[7] Ibid. 242.
[8] Ibid. 343.
[9] Ibid. 242.

monwealth or a human combination or society. It hath fallen out sometimes that both Papists and Protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked in one ship; upon which supposal I affirm, that all the liberty of conscience that ever I pleaded for, turns upon these two hinges—that none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews, or Turks, be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship, nor compelled from their own particular prayers or worship, if they practise any. I further add, that I never denied that, notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course, yea, and also command that justice, peace, and sobriety, be kept and practised, both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any of the seamen refuse to perform their services, or passengers to pay their freight; if any refuse to help, in person or purse, toward the common charges or defence; if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship, concerning their common peace or preservation; if any shall mutiny and rise up against their commanders and officers; if any should preach or write that there ought to be no commanders or officers, because all are equal in Christ, therefore no masters nor officers, no laws nor orders, nor corrections, nor punishments;—I say, I never denied, but in such cases, whatever is pretended, the commander or commanders may judge, resist, compel, and punish such transgressors, according to their deserts and merits. This, if seriously and honestly minded, may, if it so please the Father of Lights, let in some light to such as willingly shut not their eyes. I remain, studious of your common peace and liberty, Roger Williams."[1]

The supreme intellectual merit of this composition is in those very qualities that never obtrude themselves upon notice—ease, lucidity, completeness. Here we have the final result of ages of intellectual effort, presented without effort a long process of abstract reasoning made trans-

[1] Narr. Club Pub. VI. 278-279.

parent and irresistible in a picture. With a wisdom that is both just and peaceable, it fixes, for all time, the barriers against tyranny on the one side, against lawlessness on the other. It has the moral and literary harmonies of a classic. As such, it deserves to be forever memorable in our American prose.

CHAPTER X.

NEW ENGLAND: THE VERSE-WRITERS.

I.—The attitude of Puritanism toward Art—Especially toward Poetry—The unextinguished poetry in Puritanism.

II.—The Puritans of New England universally addicted to versification—The mirth of their elegies and epitaphs—The poetical expertness of Pastor John Wilson.

III.—The pleasant legend of William Morrell—His poem in Latin and English on New England.

IV.—The prodigy of "The Bay Psalm Book"—Its Reverend fabricators—Their conscientious mode of proceeding—A book fearfully and wonderfully made.

V.—Anne Bradstreet the earliest professional poet of New England—First appearance of her book—Her career—Her prose writings—Her training for poetry—Her guides and masters the later euphuists in English verse—List of her poetical works—Analysis of "The Four Elements"—"The Four Monarchies"—The fundamental error in her poetry—Her "Contemplations"—The first poet of the Merrimac—Her devout poems—Her allusions to contemporary politics—Her championship of women—Final estimate.

I.

A HAPPY surprise awaits those who come to the study of the early literature of New England with the expectation of finding it altogether arid in sentiment, or void of the spirit and aroma of poetry. The New-Englander of the seventeenth century was indeed a typical Puritan; and it will hardly be said that any typical Puritan of that century was a poetical personage. In proportion to his devotion to the ideas that won for him the derisive honor of his name, was he at war with nearly every form of the beautiful. He himself believed that there was an inappeasable feud between religion and art; and hence, the duty of suppressing art was bound up in his soul with the

master-purpose of promoting religion. He cultivated the grim and the ugly. He was afraid of the approaches of Satan through the avenues of what is graceful and joyous. The principal business of men and women in this world seemed to him to be not to make it as delightful as possible, but to get through it as safely as possible. By a whimsical and horrid freak of unconscious Manichæism, he thought that whatever is good here is appropriated to God, and whatever is pleasant, to the devil. It is not strange if he were inclined to measure the holiness of a man's life by its disagreeableness. In the logic and fury of his tremendous faith, he turned away utterly from music, from sculpture and painting, from architecture, from the adornments of costume, from the pleasures and embellishments of society; because these things seemed only "the devil's flippery and seduction" to his "ascetic soul, aglow with the gloomy or rapturous mysteries of his theology."[1] Hence, very naturally, he turned away likewise from certain great and splendid types of literature,—from the drama, from the playful and sensuous verse of Chaucer and his innumerable sons, from the secular prose writings of his contemporaries, and from all forms of modern lyric verse except the Calvinistic hymn.

Nevertheless, the Puritan did not succeed in eradicating poetry from his nature. Of course, poetry was planted there too deep even for his theological grub-hooks to root it out. Though denied expression in one way, the poetry that was in him forced itself into utterance in another. If his theology drove poetry out of many forms in which it had been used to reside, poetry itself practised a noble revenge by taking up its abode in his theology. His supreme thought was given to theology; and there he nourished his imagination with the mightiest and sublimest conceptions that a human being can entertain—conceptions of God and man, of angels and devils, of Providence

[1] E. C. Stedman, "Victorian Poets," 12.

and duty and destiny, of heaven, earth, hell. Though he stamped his foot in horror and scorn upon many exquisite and delicious types of literary art; stripped society of all its embellishments, life of all its amenities, sacred architecture of all its grandeur, the public service of divine worship of the hallowed pomp, the pathos and beauty of its most reverend and stately forms; though his prayers were often a snuffle, his hymns a dolorous whine, his extemporized liturgy a bleak ritual of ungainly postures and of harsh monotonous howls; yet the idea that filled and thrilled his soul was one in every way sublime, immense, imaginative, poetic—the idea of the awful omnipotent Jehovah, his inexorable justice, his holiness, the inconceivable brightness of his majesty, the vastness of his unchanging designs along the entire range of his relations with the hierarchies of heaven, the principalities and powers of the pit, and the elect and the reprobate of the sons of Adam. How resplendent and superb was the poetry that lay at the heart of Puritanism, was seen by the sightless eyes of John Milton, whose great epic is indeed the epic of Puritanism.[1]

II.

Turning to Puritanism as it existed in New England, we may perhaps imagine it as solemnly declining the visits of the Muses of poetry, sending out to them the blunt but honest message—'Otherwise engaged.' Nothing could be further from the truth. Of course, Thalia, and Melpomene, and Terpsichore could not under any pretence have been admitted; but Polyhymnia—why should not she have been allowed to come in? especially if she were willing to forsake her deplorable sisters, give up her pagan habits, and submit to Christian baptism. Indeed,

[1] Taine, "Hist. Eng. Lit." I. 420, calls it "the Protestant epic of damnation and grace."

the Muse of New England, whosoever that respectable damsel may have been, was a muse by no means exclusive; such as she was, she cordially visited every one who would receive her,—and every one would receive her. It is an extraordinary fact about these grave and substantial men of New England, especially during our earliest literary age, that they all had a lurking propensity to write what they sincerely believed to be poetry,—and this, in most cases, in unconscious defiance of the edicts of nature and of a predetermining Providence. Lady Mary Montagu said that in England, in her time, verse-making had become as common as taking snuff: in New England, in the age before that, it had become much more common than taking snuff—since there were some who did not take snuff. It is impressive to note, as we inspect our first period, that neither advanced age, nor high office, nor mental unfitness, nor previous condition of respectability, was sufficient to protect any one from the poetic vice. We read of venerable men, like Peter Bulkley, continuing to lapse into it when far beyond the grand climacteric. Governor Thomas Dudley was hardly a man to be suspected of such a thing; yet even against him the evidence must be pronounced conclusive: some verses in his own handwriting were found upon his person after his death. Even the sage and serious governor of Plymouth wrote ostensible poems. The renowned pulpit-orator, John Cotton, did the same; although, in some instances, he prudently concealed the fact by inscribing his English verses in Greek characters upon the blank leaves of his almanac. Here and there, even a town-clerk, placing on record the deeply prosaic proceedings of the selectmen, would adorn them in the sacred costume of poetry. Perhaps, indeed, all this was their solitary condescension to human frailty. The earthly element, the passion, the carnal taint, the vanity, the weariness, or whatever else it be that, in other men, works itself off in a pleasure-journey, in a flirtation, in going to the play, or in a convivial bout,

did in these venerable men exhaust itself in the sly dissipation of writing verses. Remembering their unfriendly attitude toward art in general, this universal mania of theirs for some forms of the poetic art—this unrestrained proclivity toward the "lust of versification"—must seem to us an odd psychological freak. Or, shall we rather say that it was not a freak at all, but a normal effort of nature, which, being unduly repressed in one direction, is accustomed to burst over all barriers in another; and that these grim and godly personages in the old times fell into the intemperance of rhyming, just as in later days, excellent ministers of the gospel and gray-haired deacons, recoiling from the sin and scandal of a game at billiards, have been known to manifest an inordinate joy in the orthodox frivolity of croquet? As respects the poetry which was perpetrated by our ancestors, it must be mentioned that a benignant Providence has its own methods of protecting the human family from intolerable misfortune; and that the most of this poetry has perished. Enough, however, has survived to furnish us with materials for everlasting gratitude, by enabling us in a measure to realize the nature and extent of the calamity which the divine intervention has spared us.

It will be natural for us to suppose that, at any rate, poetry in New England in the seventeenth century could not have been a *Gaya Sciencia*, as poetry was called in Provence in the thirteenth century.[1] Even this, however, is not quite correct; for no inconsiderable part of early New England poetry has a positively facetious intention,—that part, namely, which consists of elegies and epitaphs. Our ancestors seem to have reserved their witticisms principally for tombstones and funerals. When a man died, his surviving friends were wont to conspire together to write verses upon him—and these verses often sparkled with the most elaborate and painful jests. Thus, in 1647,

[1] Geo. Ticknor, "Hist. Spanish Lit." I. 103.

upon the death of the renowned Thomas Hooker of Hartford, his colleague in the pastorate, Samuel Stone, wrote to an eminent minister in Massachusetts certain words of grave and cautious suggestion: "You may think whether it may not be comely for you and myself and sóme other elders, to make a few verses for Mr. Hooker, and transcribe them in the beginning of his book. I do but propound it."[1] The appeal was effectual; and when, a few years later, it came Samuel Stone's turn to depart this life, those who outlived him rendered to his memory a similar service, his name furnishing an unusually pleasant opportunity for those ingenuities of allusion and those literary quirks and puns that were then thought to be among the graces of a threnody. Thus, the deceased brother was

> "A stone more than the Ebenezer famed;
> Stone, splendent diamond, right orient named;
> A cordial stone, that often cheerëd hearts
> With pleasant wit, with gospel rich imparts;
> Whetstone, that edgified the obtusest mind;
> Loadstone, that drew the iron heart unkind;
> A ponderous stone, that would the bottom sound
> Of Scripture depths, and bring out arcans found;
> A stone for kingly David's use so fit,
> As would not fail Goliath's front to hit;
> A stone, an antidote, that brake the course
> Of gangrene error by convincing force;
> A stone acute, fit to divide and square;
> A squarëd stone became Christ's building rare."[2]

The death of Samuel Danforth, of Roxbury, occurred just after that excellent person had preached through the Gospel of St. Luke in course, and also just after a new and

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[1] The entire letter in W. B. Sprague, "Annals of Am. Pulpit," I. 35.

[2] Part of "A Threnodia upon our churches' second dark eclipse, happening July 20, 1663, by death's interposition between us and that great light and divine plant, Mr. Samuel Stone, late of Hartford, in New England," preserved in Morton, "New England's Memorial," 302–3. The poem is signed "E. B.," and is attributed to Edward Bulkley, son of Peter Bulkley of Concord.

more spacious meeting-house had been erected by his congregation,— interesting personal items which found their appropriate mention in his epitaph:

"Our minds with gospel his rich lectures fed;
Luke and his life at once are finishëd,
Our new-built church now suffers too by this,
Larger its windows, but its lights are less."[1]

Connecticut had for one of its early governors the generous Edward Hopkins, as a proof of whose devoutness it is recorded that his prayers were so fervent "that he frequently fell a bleeding at the nose, through the agony of spirit with which he labored in them."[2] After his death, an epitaph was written upon him, in which his glorious resurrection is predicted in this spirited legal metaphor:

"But Heaven, not brooking that the earth should share
In the least atom of a piece so rare,
Intends to sue out, by a new revise,
His *habeas corpus* at the grand assize."[3]

In the year 1668, there died in Cambridge "that supereminent minister of the gospel, Mr. Jonathan Mitchell," and upon his "deplored death" the following epitaph was composed:

"Here lies the darling of his time,
Mitchell expirëd in his prime;
Who four years short of forty-seven,
Was found full ripe and plucked for heaven;
Was full of prudent zeal and love,
Faith, patience, wisdom from above;
New England's stay, next age's story,
The churches' gem, the college glory.
Angels may speak him—ah! not I,—
Whose worth's above hyperbole.
But for our loss, wer't in my power,
I'd weep an everlasting shower."[4]

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[1] "Magnalia," II. 62. [2] Ibid. I. 145. [3] Ibid. 148.

[4] In Morton, "New England's Memorial," 341, signed "J. S.," supposed to be either Joshua Scottow, or the Rev. John Sherman of Watertown.

Of all the manufacturers of this kind of verse, probably no one, in that period, displayed an alacrity and perseverance equal to John Wilson, the first pastor of Boston, who, as Cotton Mather says, "had so nimble a faculty of putting his devout thoughts into verse, that he signalized himself by . . . sending poems to all persons, in all places, on all occasions, . . . wherein if the curious relished the piety, sometimes, rather than the poetry, the capacity of the most therein to be accommodated must be considered."[1] He was matchless in skill to detect allegories, to invent anagrams, to work out acrostics, and to twist puns and conceits into consolatory verses on mournful occasions; and these verses, steadfastly held to be poetry, were cherished as sacred by the recipients, even as were "the handkerchiefs carried from Paul to uphold the disconsolate."[2] It was most fitting therefore that these shining poetic services of the faithful pastor should be remembered by the poet, who, after John Wilson's death, sought to embalm his memory in some congenial verses, and who addressing New England exclaims:

> "this father will return no more
> To sit the moderator of thy sages.
> But tell his zeal for thee to after ages,
> His care to guide his flock and feed his lambs
> By words, works prayers, psalms, alms, and anagrams."[3]

III.

Over the early literary annals of New England, there hovers one poetic reminiscence, very slight, perhaps, and dim, but altogether gracious, and worthy of being saved from fading into entire forgetfulness. It is of the presence among our ancestors, for a little while, of a noble-minded clergyman of the English Church, an accomplished

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[1] "Magnalia," I. 302.

[2] This comparison is by John Wilson's son, "Magnalia," I. 303.

[3] "Magnalia," I. 320.

scholar, a pleasant Christian gentleman, William Morrell, who came to live in New England in 1623, with the colony under Captain Robert Gorges, at Wessagusset, and who abode in that colony during its brief and unfortunate existence. Upon the failure of the enterprise that had brought him hither, William Morrell, who had in fact come armed with a commission to exercise a superintendency over the churches which should be established in New England, went to the little village of Plymouth; and dwelt there quietly for a whole year among the Pilgrims; he, the English churchman, holding genial fellowship with those peaceful separatists, and courteously forbearing even to mention to them his commission until he was upon the point of leaving them. He was a gentle, meditative, brotherly man; and while living among them, he spent his time chiefly in studying New England—the country, the climate, the white people and the Indians, and in writing an elaborate Latin poem upon the subject.[1] This poem, entitled "Nova Anglia," was published by him in London, in 1625, the Latin text being accompanied by a version, in English rhymed pentameters, done by himself. He wrote good Oxford Latin of the period, and in versification that is blameless. His English rendering of his own Latin, is less a translation than a wide and wandering paraphrase of it; having some felicities here and there, but in the main clumsy and tuneless. He was an Englishman having the accomplishment, not unusual among scholars in that time, of being more expert in the dead language of Rome than in the living language of his own country; for which, probably, he had to thank his English university, then contemptuous of everything English in language and in literature. He introduces his poem by an address to the reader, which at least has the grace of literary humility and of entire accuracy of judgment:

[1] Reprinted in 1 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. I. 125–139.

"If thou, Apollo, hold'st thy sceptre forth
To these harsh numbers, that's thy royal worth.
Vain is all search in these to search that vein
Whose stately style is great Apollo's strain.
Minerva ne'er distilled into my muse
Her sacred drops; my pumice wants all juice.'
My muse is plain, concise; her fame's to tell
In truth and method. Love or leave. Farewell."

At the opening of the poem, one finds this not unpleasant description of New England:

"Fear not, poor muse, 'cause first to sing her fame,
That's yet scarce known, unless by map or name;
A grand-child to earth's paradise is born,
Well-limb'd, well-nerv'd, fair, rich, sweet, yet forlorn.
Thou blest director, so direct my verse
That it may win her people, friends, commerce;
Whilst her sweet air, rich soil, blest seas, my pen
Shall blaze, and tell the natures of her men.

. . . . . .

Westward a thousand leagues, a spacious land
Is made, unknown to them that it command,
Of fruitful mould, and no less fruitless main,
Inrich with springs and prey, highland and plain;
The light, well-tempered, humid air, whose breath
Fills full all concaves betwixt heaven and earth,
So that the region of the air is blest
With what earth's mortals wish to be possessed."

He thus proceeds to give, at considerable length, a series of pictures—somewhat lacking in distinctness and color—of the climate and productions of the country, of its recent inhabitants, and more particularly of the Indians. The poem culminates in an impassioned appeal for Christian pity and help, on behalf of these dark-minded savages, whose nature

"Retains not one poor sparkle of true light;"

and in view of their inevitable doom unless rescued by Christian intervention, he utters this sorrowful cry:

"And now what soul dissolves not into tears,
That hell must have ten thousand thousand heirs,
Which have no true light of that truth divine,
Or sacred wisdom of the eternal Trine!"

His closing lines, which express the author's modest but very noble purpose in writing the poem, leave with us an impression of the lovableness and benignity of his heart, and especially of his generous compassion for the rude and neglected land beyond the western ocean, where he had thus dwelt for a time a gentle and friendly spectator:

Si mea barbaricae prosint conamina genti;
Si valet Anglicanis incompta placere poesis,
Et sibi perfaciles hac reddere gente potentes,
Assiduosque pios sibi persuadere colonos;
Si doceat primi vitam victumque parentis;
Angli si fuerint Indis exempla beate
Vivendi, capiant quibus arduà limina coeli;
Omnia succedunt votis; modulamina spero
Haec mea sublimis fuerint praesagia regni.

His English version of these lines is much closer to the original than is usual with him, and is by no means despicable as poetry:

"If these poor lines may win this country love,
Or kind compassion in the English move,
Persuade our mighty and renownëd state
This poor blind people to commiserate,
Or painful men to this good land invite,
Whose holy works these natives may inlight;
If heaven grant these, to see here built, I trust,
An English kingdom from this Indian dust."

IV.

There has descended to us from our first literary period one very considerable specimen of English verse, "The Bay Psalm Book," which will be forever memorable among us as a sort of prodigy in that kind,—a poetic phenome-

non, happily unique, we may hope, in all the literatures of English speech. This portentous metrical fabric was the joint production of "the chief divines in the country,"[1] each of whom took a separate portion of the original Hebrew for translation; the workmen most conspicuous in the sacred job being Thomas Welde, John Eliot, and Richard Mather. To the one last named was also assigned the duty of writing a preface for the work, in order to explain and commend to the churches the achievement which had been thus prepared for their edification. This preface is a characteristic bit of Puritan prose, very Hebraic in learning, very heroic in conscientiousness, sharp and minute in opinion, quaint in phrase. Of course, he had to deal with the question, then somewhat disturbing, whether the Psalms should be sung "in their own words or in such words as English poetry is wont to run into;" and of course, he establishes the propriety of the latter method. But in thus turning the Psalms of David into verses "which," as he rather hesitantly puts it, "are commonly called metrical," "it hath been one part of our religious care and faithful endeavor to keep close to the original text. . . . If, therefore, the verses are not always so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect, let them consider that God's altar needs not our polishings, for we have respected rather a plain translation than to smooth our verses with the sweetness of any paraphrase; and so have attended conscience rather than elegance, fidelity rather than poetry." The work thus accurately described, was published at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1640,—the first book in English, probably, that ever issued from any printing-press in America.[2] It is entitled "The Whole Book of Psalms, faithfully translated into English Metre," and undoubtedly deserves the preëminence conceded to it

[1] "Magnalia," I. 407.

[2] The first book, not the first printed production. "The Freeman's Oath" was the first; an almanac was the second; both in 1639. Next came "The Bay Psalm Book." Thomas, "Hist. Printing in Am." I. 46.

by John Nichol,[1] of being "the worst of many bad." In turning over these venerable pages, one suffers by sympathy something of the obvious toil of the undaunted men who, in the very teeth of nature, did all this; and whose appalling sincerity must, in our eyes, cover a multitude of such sins, as sentences wrenched about end for end, clauses heaved up and abandoned in chaos, words disembowelled or split quite in two in the middle, and dissonant combinations of sound that are the despair of such poor vocal organs as are granted to human beings. The verses, indeed, seem to have been hammered out on an anvil, by blows from a blacksmith's sledge. Everywhere in the book, is manifest the agony it cost the writers to find two words that would rhyme—more or less; and so often as this arduous feat is achieved, the poetic athlete appears to pause awhile from sheer exhaustion, panting heavily for breath. Let us now read, for our improvement, a part of the Fifty-Eighth Psalm:

> "The wicked are estranged from
> the womb, they goe astray
> as soone as ever they are borne;
> uttering lyes are they.
> Their poyson's like serpents poyson:
> they like deafe Aspe, her eare
> that stops. Though Charmer wisely charme,
> his voice she will not heare.
> Within their mouth doe thou their teeth
> break out, o God most strong,
> doe thou Jehovah, the great teeth
> break of the lions young."

It is pathetic to contemplate the tokens of intellectual anxiety scattered along these pages; the prolonged baffling, perspiration, and discouragement which these good men had to pass through, in order to overcome the metrical problems presented, for example, by the Fifty-First Psalm:

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[1] In Encyc. Brit. 9th ed. I. 720.

"Create in mee cleane heart *at* last
God: a right spirit in me new make.
Nor from thy presence quite me cast,
thy holy spright not from me take.
Mee thy salvations joy restore,
and stay me with thy spirit free.
I will transgressors teach thy lore,
and sinners shall be turned to thee."[1]

V.

It will not be difficult for the reader to believe that the examples of early American verse that have now been laid before him, were the productions of persons whom it is a charity to call amateurs in the art of poetry. There was, however, belonging to this primal literary period, one poet who, in some worthy sense, found in poetry a vocation. The first professional poet of New England was a woman.

In the year 1650,—a full twelvemonth after the head of Charles the First had fallen upon the block in front of his palace at Whitehall, the very year in which Oliver Cromwell was giving to the Presbyterian Scots on the field of Dunbar a strong dose of English Congregationalism,—there was published, in London, a book of poems written by a gifted young woman of the New England wilderness, Anne Bradstreet by name. This book bore one of those fantastic and long-winded title-pages, at once a table of contents and a printer's puff, that the literary folk of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries greatly delighted in. It reads thus: "The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America; or, Several Poems, compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight; wherein especially is contained a complete discourse and description of the four elements, constitutions, ages of man, seasons of the year;

[1] The specimens here given of "The Bay Psalm Book," I take from the copy of the first edition once owned by Thomas Prince, and now in the Boston Public Library.

together with an exact epitome of the four monarchies, viz., the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman; also, a dialogue between Old England and New concerning the late troubles; with divers other pleasant and serious poems. By a gentlewoman in those parts. Printed at London, for Stephen Bowtell, at the sign of the Bible, in Pope's Head Alley, 1650."[1]

Perhaps that year, 1650, was not the friendliest year that could be imagined for any Tenth Muse to get the attention of the world, even though she had "lately sprung up in America," and even though the poems she sang were "compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight." Not the Muses, one would say, but rather the Furies had the field just then; and the dulcet notes of any gentle word-music had little chance of being heard, amid the universal din of the crashing footsteps of Mars striding angrily up and down the island, while, in the pauses of his wrathful spasms, the politicians were bent on filling the air with their clamorous and sullen jargon. But whether the time were fortunate, or otherwise, for the publication of Anne Bradstreet's poems, not greatly did it concern Anne Bradstreet herself, far away from London in her rustic mansion, amid the picturesque hills and rough woods of Andover, and within sound of the murmurs of the Merrimac.

She was born in England, in 1612. Her father, Thomas Dudley, an austere Puritan, a man of much study and stern will, had settled down, after some military experience, as steward of the estates of the Puritan nobleman, the Earl of Lincoln. It was while he was in that responsible service, that his brilliant young daughter passed some of her girlhood in the earl's castle of Sempringham; and we may not doubt that a mind so eager for knowledge as

[1] The entire works of Anne Bradstreet, in prose and verse, edited by John Harvard Ellis, were published in sumptuous form at Charlestown, Mass., in 1867; to which volume I refer in the present chapter.

was hers, made high festival over the various treasures of books that were gathered there. In the year 1628, when she had reached the age of sixteen, she married the man in whose loving and grave companionship she passed the remainder of her life, Simon Bradstreet, nine years older than herself, of a good family in Suffolk, a graduate of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, educated to business by her own father, a man of Puritan faith and demeanor, God-fearing, and fearing no man. Two years later, the young people joined the great company of wealthy and cultivated Puritans who sailed away to New England, where, thenceforward, Simon Bradstreet steadily advanced in importance, and came to take a great part in matters of church and state, living out a long career there as colonial secretary, judge, legislator, governor, ambassador, and royal councillor, dying at last in great honor, at the great age of ninety-four, the white-haired and wise-tongued Nestor of the Puritan commonwealth.

This coming away from old England to New England was, for many of these wealthy emigrants, a sad sacrifice of taste and personal preference; and for none of them, probably, was it more so than for this girl-wife, Anne Bradstreet, who, with a scholar's thirst for knowledge, and a poet's sensitiveness to the elegant and the ugly, would have delighted in the antique richness and the mellow beauty of English life, as much as she recoiled from the savage surroundings, the scant privileges, the crude, realistic, and shaggy forms of society in America. "After a short time," she says in an autobiographic sketch, "I changed my condition and was married, and came into this country, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it."[1] But though she thus submitted to her fate, the effort was one that had to be ever-renewed; and in her own writings, as in

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 5.

the writings of her contemporaries, one hears, between the lines, the plaintive cry of their consciousness of being, for a sacred duty and by God's unmistakable will, in a remote exile :

> "Remember, Lord, thy folk, whom thou
> To wilderness hast brought." [1]

It took several years for her husband and herself to find their way to their permanent home ; but in 1644, after many settlements, they settled finally near Andover, where, upon a farm which is still pointed out as the Bradstreet farm, amid noble and inspiring natural scenery, and within the distance of only a mile and a quarter from the Merrimac, she passed the remainder of her life, dying in 1672, at the age of sixty.

So, whatever work this writer wrought, whether good or bad, she wrought in the midst of circumstances that did not altogether help her, but hindered her rather. She was the laborious wife of a New England farmer, the mother of eight children, and herself from childhood of a delicate constitution. The most of her poems were produced between 1630 and 1642, that is, before she was thirty years old; and during these years, she had neither leisure, nor elegant surroundings, nor freedom from anxious thoughts, nor even abounding health. Somehow, during her busy life-time, she contrived to put upon record compositions numerous enough to fill a royal octavo volume of four hundred pages,—compositions which entice and reward our reading of them, two hundred years after she lived.

Perhaps her prose writings, by no means many or long, are likely to be more attractive to the altered tastes of our time, than her poems can be. They consist of a brief sketch of her own life, called "Religious Experiences," and of a series of aphorisms bearing the title of "Meditations Divine and Moral." It is in the latter work that we find the best examples of her strength of thought, and of her feli-

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 34.

city in condensed and pungent expression: "A ship that bears much sail, and little or no ballast, is easily overset; and that man whose head hath great abilities and his heart little or no grace, is in danger of foundering."[1] "Authority without wisdom, is like a heavy axe without an edge, fitter to bruise than polish."[2] "Iron, till it be throughly heat, is uncapable to be wrought; so God sees good to cast some men into the furnace of affliction, and then beats them on his anvil into what frame he pleases."[3] "We read in Scripture of three sorts of arrows,—the arrow of an enemy, the arrow of pestilence, and the arrow of a slanderous tongue. The two first kill the body, the last the good name; the two former leave a man when he is once dead, but the last mangles him in his grave."[4] "Sore laborers have hard hands, and old sinners have brawny consciences."[5] "We often see stones hang with drops, not from any innate moisture, but from a thick air about them. So may we sometimes see marble-hearted sinners seem full of contrition; but it is not from any dew of grace within, but from some black clouds that impends them, which produces these sweating effects."[6] "Dim eyes are the concomitants of old age; and short-sightedness in those that are eyes of a republic, foretells a declining state."[7] "Ambitious men are like hops, that never rest climbing so long as they have anything to stay upon; but take away their props, and they are of all, the most dejected."[8]

It was, however, as a poet only, that Anne Bradstreet was known in literature to her contemporaries. Our expectations of finding high poetic merit in her work, are not increased by ascertaining the lines of culture through which she trained herself for her calling as poet. Literature, for her, was not a republic of letters, hospitable to all forms of human thought, but a strict Puritan commonwealth, founded on a scheme of narrow ascetic intoler-

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[1] Anne Bradstreet, 48. [2] Ibid. 50. [3] Ibid. 54. [4] Ibid. 55.
[5] Ibid. 56. [6] Ibid. 58–59. [7] Ibid. 55. [8] Ibid. 55.

ance, and excluding from its citizenship some of the sublimest, daintiest, and most tremendous types of literary expression. Evidently, in her mind, William Shakespeare, play-wright and actor, was an alien, and a godless person; and Ben Jonson, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Ford, Shirley, and all the rest of that superb group of masters, were sons of Belial. Furthermore, while her imagination thus lost the witchery and the stimulation of the great English dramatists, she was taught to seek for the very essence of poetry in the quirks, the puns, the contorted images, the painful ingenuities of George Wither and Francis Quarles, and especially of "The Divine Weeks and Works" of the French poet Du Bartas, done into English by Joshua Sylvester. In short, she was a pupil of the fantastic school of English poetry—the poetry of the later euphuists; the special note of which is the worship of the quaint, the strained, the disproportionate, the grotesque, and the total sacrifice of the beautiful on the altar of the ingenious. Harmony, taste, dignity, even decency, were by this school eagerly cast away, if only an additional twist could be given to the turn of a metaphor, or still another antithesis could be wrenched from the agonies of a weary epithet. It is easy enough to find in the writings of Anne Bradstreet grotesque passages, preposterous stuff, jingling abominations; but we shall only mislead ourselves, if we look upon these as traits peculiarly characteristic of this writer, or of American verse-writing in the seventeenth century. They were, rather, the symptoms of a wider and far deeper literary disease—a disease which, originating in Italy in the sixteenth century, swept westward and northward like the plague, desolating for a time the literatures of Spain, of France, and of England. The worst lines of Anne Bradstreet and of the other American verse-writers in the seventeenth century, can be readily matched for fantastic perversion, and for the total absence of beauty, by passages from the poems of John Donne, George Herbert, Crashaw, Cleveland,

Wither, Quarles, Thomas Coryat, John Taylor, and even of Herrick, Cowley, and Dryden.[1]

Glancing over the entire field of Anne Bradstreet's poems, we find them to include, first, a number of minor pieces, such as elegies, epitaphs, and complimentary verses; second, two longer poems entitled "A Dialogue between Old England and New," and "Contemplations;" and third, a series of huge and heavy poems wherein the topics are grouped together in quaternions. The first of these quaternions is named "The Four Elements;" and some description of this poem will give us a sufficient idea of the method and spirit of all the poems that constitute the group. The personages of the poem are four, Fire, Air, Earth, and Water; and upon occasion they

> "did contest
> Which was the strongest, noblest, and the best,
> Who was of greatest use and mightiest force."[2]

Each of these potent beings is represented as having a very high opinion of her own merits, and as disposed to assert this opinion with all the loquacity and controversial vehemence of a theological wrangle in the seventeenth century:

> "All would be chief, and all scorned to be under;
> Whence issued winds and rains, lightning and thunder.
> The quaking earth did groan, the sky looked black;
> The Fire, the forcëd Air, in sunder crack;
> The sea did threat the heavens, the heavens the earth,
> All lookëd like a chaos or new birth:

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[1] The later English euphuists were called by Dr. Johnson "the metaphysical poets," a description that does not describe them. Perhaps Milton's phrase is the best one—the "fantastics." What Donne and his poetic associates were to English literature, that were Marini to Italian literature, Gongora to Spanish, Du Bartas to French. For accounts of the "conceited" epoch in English Literature, see Henry Morley, "First Sketch of Eng. Lit." 526–532; Thomas Arnold, "Manual of Eng. Lit." 160–164; Taine, "Hist. Eng. Lit." I. 201–206.

[2] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 103.

Fire broilëd Earth, and scorchëd Earth it choked:
Both by their darings Water so provoked
That roaring in it came, and with its source
Soon made the combatants abate their force.
The rumbling, hissing, puffing was so great,
The world's confusion it did seem to threat."[1]

All this smoke and pother are over the small question of priority between the Four Elements, in the privilege of making the harangues in which each is to let forth her own preëminent merits, and to denounce, after the good old fashion of theological debaters, the vices and impotencies of all competitors. The difficulty is at last composed by an agreement that Fire should have the floor first, and be followed, in order, by Earth, Water, and Air. Whereupon Fire springs to her feet, and makes a hot and learned speech, recounting her valuable services in the mechanic arts, in warfare, in cookery, in chemistry, and in other mundane employments; then waxing self-complacent, and leaving these lowly utilities, she proceeds to claim the glory and the beauty of the warm and illuminating orbs that blaze in the sky:

"my flame aspires
To match on high with the celestial fires."[2]

She asserts for herself, in particular, the honor of the annual blessing which the sun works upon the Earth:

"How doth his warmth refresh thy frozen back,
And trim thee brave in green, after thy black.
Both man and beast rejoice at his approach,
And birds do sing to see his glittering coach."[3]

After much discourse about her astrological operations, she boasts of her volcanic eruptions, and of all the mighty cities that she has consumed, and points prophetically to her final and most triumphant exertion of power when all things upon earth shall surrender to her flames:

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[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 103. [2] Ibid. 105. [3] Ibid. 106.

"And in a word, the world I shall consume,
And all therein, at that great day of doom."[1]

Having made this glowing speech, Fire takes her seat, and Earth mounts the rostrum, showing herself not inferior to Fire in valiant braggadocio, and in the will to retort upon Fire in many a characteristic taunt and quip. Then,

"Scarce Earth had done, but the angry Water moved:
Sister, quoth she, it had full well behoved
Among your boastings to have praisëd me,
Cause of your fruitfulness as you shall see.
. . . . . .
Not one of us, all knows, that's like to thee—
Ever in craving from the other three.
But thou art bound to me above the rest,
Who am thy drink, thy blood, thy sap and best.
If I withhold, what art thou? Dead, dry lump,
Thou bearest nor grass nor plant nor tree nor stump.
Thy extreme thirst is moistened by my love
With springs below and showers from above;
Or else thy sunburnt face and gaping chops
Complain to the heavens if I withhold my drops."[2]

The speech of Water, though rather a dry one, is equal to the others, perhaps, in the flow of its fanfaronade. By the dire calamity of droughts she argues, in converse fashion, her own utility to man and beast; she mentions proudly all her "fountains, rivers, lakes, and ponds," her "sundry seas, black and white," her various curative waters, her mysterious tides, her dews, the value of her oceans and rivers to the traffic of the world; and, finally, she illustrates her greatness by the destruction and havoc worked upon the world through her great floods, those of Deucalion, Noah, and others. At last she ends:

"Much might I say of wracks, but that I'll spare,
And now give place unto our sister, Air."[3]

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[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 108. [2] Ibid. 114. [3] Ibid. 118.

Upon the whole, Madam Air is rather the most voluble and expert of all, in this contest of braggart speech-making. With a sort of meek self-complacency, as thanking God for her humility, she thus sets out upon her oration:

"Content, quoth Air, to speak the last of you,
Yet am not ignorant first was my due.
I do suppose you'll yield without control,
I am the breath of every living soul.
Mortals, what one of you that loves not me
Abundantly more than my sisters three?
. . . . . .
I ask the man condemned, that's near his death,
Now gladly should his gold purchase his breath.
. . . . . .
No, Earth, thy witching trash were all but vain
If my pure air thy sons did not sustain.
. . . . . .
Nay, what are words which do reveal the mind?
Speak who or what they will, they are but wind.
Your drums, your trumpets, and your organs' sound,
What is't but forcëd air which doth rebound?
And such are echoes and report of th' gun
That tells afar the exploit which it hath done.
Your songs and pleasant tunes, they are the same,
And so's the notes which nightingales do frame.
Ye forging smiths, if bellows once were gone,
Your red-hot work more coldly would go on.
Ye mariners, 'tis I that fill your sails
And speed you to your port with wishëd gales.
When burning heat doth cause you faint, I cool;
And when I smile, your ocean's like a pool.
I help to ripe the corn, I turn the mill,
And with myself I every vacuum fill.
The ruddy, sweet sanguine is like to Air,
And youth and spring, sages to me compare."[1]

In continuing this rehearsal of her merits, she gives a list of her "fowls"—the feathery inhabitants of her empire; she speaks of her force when offended, as shown in fevers and in pestilences, and especially in tempests, exclaiming:

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 119–120.

"How many rich-fraught vessels have I split?
Some upon sands, some upon rocks, have hit;
Some have I forced to gain an unknown shore;
Some overwhelmed with waves and seen no more."[1]

There is no little poetic vividness in her picturé of the airy battles sometimes fought in her sky, and of the dreadful signals which these high phenomena hold out over the earth:

"Then what prodigious sights I sometimes show:
As battles pitched in th' air, as countries know,
Their joining, fighting, forcing, and retreat,
That earth appears in heaven, O wonder great!
Sometimes red, flaming swords and blazing stars,
Portentous signs of famines, plagues, and wars,
Which make the mighty monarchs fear their fates,
By death or great mutation of their states."[2]

The last poem of this series, "The Four Monarchies," is by far the longest and most ambitious. It is simply a rhymed chronicle of ancient history from Nimrod to Tarquinius Superbus, following very closely Sir Walter Raleigh's "History of the World." Heavy as the poem seems to us, to the first generation of her readers, doubtless, it seemed the most precious issue of her genius. It commended itself to the sturdy and careful minds of her Puritan constituency, as useful poetry. They could read it without any twinges of self-reproach; it was not too pleasant; it was not trivial or antic or amusing; they were in no danger of losing their souls, by being borne away on the vain and airy enticements of frivolous words; then, best of all, it was not poetic fiction, but solid fact. Very likely, they gave to her their choicest praise, and called her, for this work, a painful poet; in which compliment every modern reader will most cordially join.

Of course, Anne Bradstreet had ample precedents in English literature for this form of poetry.[3] Of course,

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 121. [2] Ibid. 122.

[3] For example, "The Mirror for Magistrates," Daniel's "History of the Civil Wars," and Drayton's "Barons' Wars," to say nothing of the early chronicles, many of which were in verse.

too, she was grossly misled; since poetry is nothing, if it is nothing more than rhymed historical teaching. The fatal taint in all her poetical life was that, badly instructed by her literary guides, she too generally drew her materials from books rather than from nature. How much better, had she bravely looked within her own heart, and out upon the real world, and given voice to herself rather than to mere erudition! What she could have done in this way, she has partly shown in "Contemplations," the very best of her poems. It was written late in her life, at her home in Andover, and is a genuine expression of poetic feeling in the presence of nature; not a laborious transfusion into metre of leaden historical items.

She stands confronting the gorgeous array of the forests when robed in their October tints:

"Sometime now past in the autumnal tide,
When Phœbus wanted but one hour to bed,
The trees all richly clad, yet void of pride,
Were gilded o'er by his rich golden head."[1]

Her eye advances from one glorious object to another, "the stately oak," "the glistering sun," and from each she evokes some noble suggestion:

"Silent, alone, where none or saw or heard,
In pathless paths I led my wandering feet;
My humble eyes to lofty skies I reared
To sing some song my mazëd muse thought meet."[2]

At last, she reaches the banks of the beautiful river whose massive, potent, and calm presence must often have been to her a soothing and strengthening refuge:

"Under the cooling shadow of a stately elm,
Close sat I by a goodly river's side,
Where gliding streams the rocks did overwhelm;
A lonely place, with pleasures dignified.
I once that loved the shady woods so well,
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 370. [2] Ibid. 372.

While on the stealing stream I fixed mine eye,
Which to the longed for ocean held its course,
I marked nor crooks, nor rubs, that there did lie,
Could hinder aught, but still augment its force:
O happy flood, quoth I, that holds thy race
Till thou arrive at thy belovëd place.
Nor is it rocks or shoals that can obstruct thy pace.

Nor is't enough that thou alone may'st slide,
But hundred brooks in thy clear waves do meet;
So hand in hand along with thee they glide
To Thetis' house, where all embrace and greet.
Thou emblem true of what I count the best,
O could I lead my rivulets to rest,
So may we pass to that vast mansion, ever blest.

. . . . . .

While musing thus, with contemplation fed,
And thousand fancies buzzing in my brain,
The sweet-tongued Philomel perched o'er my head,
And chanted forth a most melodious strain,
Which rapt me so with wonder and delight,
I judged my hearing better than my sight,
And wished me wings with her awhile to take my flight."[1]

This strain of music from the "merry bird" draws, likewise, from the poet a rapturous eulogy upon the free, sweet life of the songster, that

"Feels no sad thoughts, nor cruciating cares."

With this, she contrasts the worried and baffled existence of man, who nevertheless clings to that which is so unsatisfying:

"And yet this sinful creature, frail and vain,
This lump of wretchedness, of sin and sorrow,
This weather-beaten vessel wracked with pain,
Joys not in hope of an eternal morrow."[2]

Through this rather conventional path of reflection she proceeds till, in the final stanza of the poem, she rises to an altitude of noble and even stately song:

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 377.

[2] Ibid. 380.

"O Time, the fatal wrack of mortal things,
That draws oblivion's curtains over kings:
Their sumptuous monuments, men know them not;
Their names without a record are forgot;
Their parts, their ports, their pomps, all laid in th' dust;
Nor wit, nor gold, nor buildings, scape time's rust.
But he whose name is graved in the white stone
Shall last and shine, when all of these are gone." [1]

This poem of "Contemplations" is not the only one in which Anne Bradstreet, liberated from her book-learning, has shown the power that was in her of giving strong and poetic expression to her own feeling. There is a little poem written within a few months of her death, entitled "Longing for Heaven," which has in it some lines of genuine pathos, simplicity, and verbal grace:

"As weary pilgrim now at rest
Hugs with delight his silent nest;
His wasted limbs now lie full soft,
That miry steps have trodden oft;
Blesses himself to think upon
His dangers past, and travails done;
. . . . . .
A pilgrim I, on earth perplexed,
With sins, with cares and sorrows vexed,
By age and pains brought to decay,
And my clay house mouldering away,
Oh, how I long to be at rest
And soar on high among the blest." [2]

Very naturally, she was a writer of hymns; and of these we must frankly say that they are bad enough. Nevertheless, when compared with the cacophonous and jagged productions of her hymnological contemporaries in New England, they seem marvels of music, and of fluent skill.

It is interesting to trace in her poems the tokens of the opinions she held concerning the politics of those times, by which must be meant the affairs of church as well as of state, in England as well as in America. In her poem of

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 381.

[2] Ibid. 42–43.

"Old England and New," she has given a vigorous statement of the questions then at issue in the mother-land. Though she sided with parliament, she was by no means inclined to democratic opinions. On the ecclesiastical side of politics, however, she held without reserve the most sweeping anti-Romanist, and anti-Ritualist conclusions:

> "These are the days the church's foes to crush,
> To root out Popelings, head, tail, branch, and rush.
> Let's bring Baal's vestments forth to make a fire,
> Their mitres, surplices, and all their tire,
> Copes, rochets, crosiers, and such empty trash,
> And let their names consume, but let the flash
> Light Christendom and all the world, to see
> We hate Rome's Whore with all her trumpery."[1]

The invective of these ringing lines, verging well toward satire, is not a solitary example of her capacity in that direction. Indeed, a sort of grim mirth now and then relaxes the severity of her verse, and expresses itself in a half-playful sarcasm. Thus,

> "one would more glad
> With a tame fool converse, than with a mad."[2]

The traditional disparagement by men, of the intelligence of her sex, of course she felt,—the sting of it, the wrong of it; and she resented it, sometimes in the form of a sarcastic reference, sometimes in that of an ironical admission that hers was indeed "a less noble gender," and sometimes in that of a superb and defiant denial. For instance, as a woman, she seemed to take vast pleasure in the magnificent career of Queen Elizabeth:

> "She hath wiped off the aspersion of her sex,
> That women wisdom lack to play the Rex."[3]

Appealing to the universal and enthusiastic pride of Englishmen in the imperial greatness of their recent woman-

[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 340-341. [2] Ibid. 145. [3] Ibid. 359.

monarch, the poet, in a flash, retaliates upon masculine detraction, with this keen and glorious thrust:

> "Now say, have women worth, or have they none?
> Or had they some, but with our Queen is't gone?
> Nay, masculines, you have thus taxed us long;
> But she, though dead, will vindicate our wrong.
> Let such as say our sex is void of reason,
> Know 'tis a slander now, but once was treason."[1]

Upon the whole, it is impossible to deny that Anne Bradstreet was sadly misguided by the poetic standards of her religious sect and of her literary period, and that the vast bulk of her writings consists not of poetry, but of metrical theology and chronology and politics and physics. Yet, amid all this lamentable rubbish, there is often to be found such an ingot of genuine poetry, as proves her to have had, indeed, the poetic endowment. Of her own claims as a writer of verse, she kept for herself a very modest estimate; and in the Prologue to her volume, she speaks of her writings in diffident lines, whose merit alone would prompt us to grant to her a higher poetic rank than she herself asks for:

> "And oh, ye high flown quills that soar the skies,
> And ever with your prey still catch your praise;
> If e'er you deign these lowly lines your eyes,
> Give thyme and parsley wreaths: I ask no bays.
> This mean and unrefinëd ore of mine
> Will make your glistering gold but more to shine."[2]

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[1] Works of Anne Bradstreet, 361.

[2] Ibid. 102. In the last line but one I have substituted "ore" for "ure," which, in spite of the explanation of the latest editor of her works, I think to be a misprint in the first edition. This may be a suitable place in which to mention the interesting fact that among the lineal descendants of this noble personage—this "Gentlewoman of New England" as she was designated on the title-page of the first edition of her poems, this "peerless gentlewoman" as John Norton calls her—are included the Channings, the Buckminsters, Eliza B. Lee, Richard H. Dana the poet, Richard H. Dana the prose-writer, Wendell Phillips, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

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